



DEFENCE OF A BLOCKHOUSE.

THE
MEN OF THE BACKWOODS

*TRUE STORIES AND SKETCHES OF
THE INDIANS AND THE INDIAN FIGHTERS*

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'STORIES OF THE WILD WEST,' ETC.

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PREFACE.

IN another book, I have told the story of how the English race gained a footing on the coasts of the New World, and the design of the present volume is to give some account of the clearing and settlement of its vast inland forests. To do so effectively, it has seemed best to restrict the view to one part, and that the most prominent in the story. Throughout the following pages, accordingly, 'the backwoods' are taken to mean that region most familiarly known to us under this name, the once thickly-wooded country between the Alleghany range and the prairies of the west, and from the cane swamps of the south to the Canadian lakes, now forming part of the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky. And the epoch I have chosen is the momentous half-century or so that has the revolutionary war as its central point, during which the pioneers of civilisation were in almost constant collision with the most formidable of the Indian tribes, who had learned to use the weapons of the white men, but had not yet learned

the hopelessness of the contest with their resolute valour and perseverance.

Without observing an exact historical order in these sketches, or forbidding myself to stray further afield sometimes for anecdotes and illustrations, I have tried to portray the white and the red heroes of that fierce contest, and their dealings with each other from the first appearance of the settlers in the valley of the Ohio, to the last struggle which secured their supremacy by the downfall of Tecumseh.

The story is one naturally not so familiar to English as to American readers; but it has afforded so many scenes for a class of fiction popular on both sides of the Atlantic, that the facts of it may well prove no less interesting to all who need not be ashamed to think that they are of the same race as the conquerors of the backwoods.

A. R. H.

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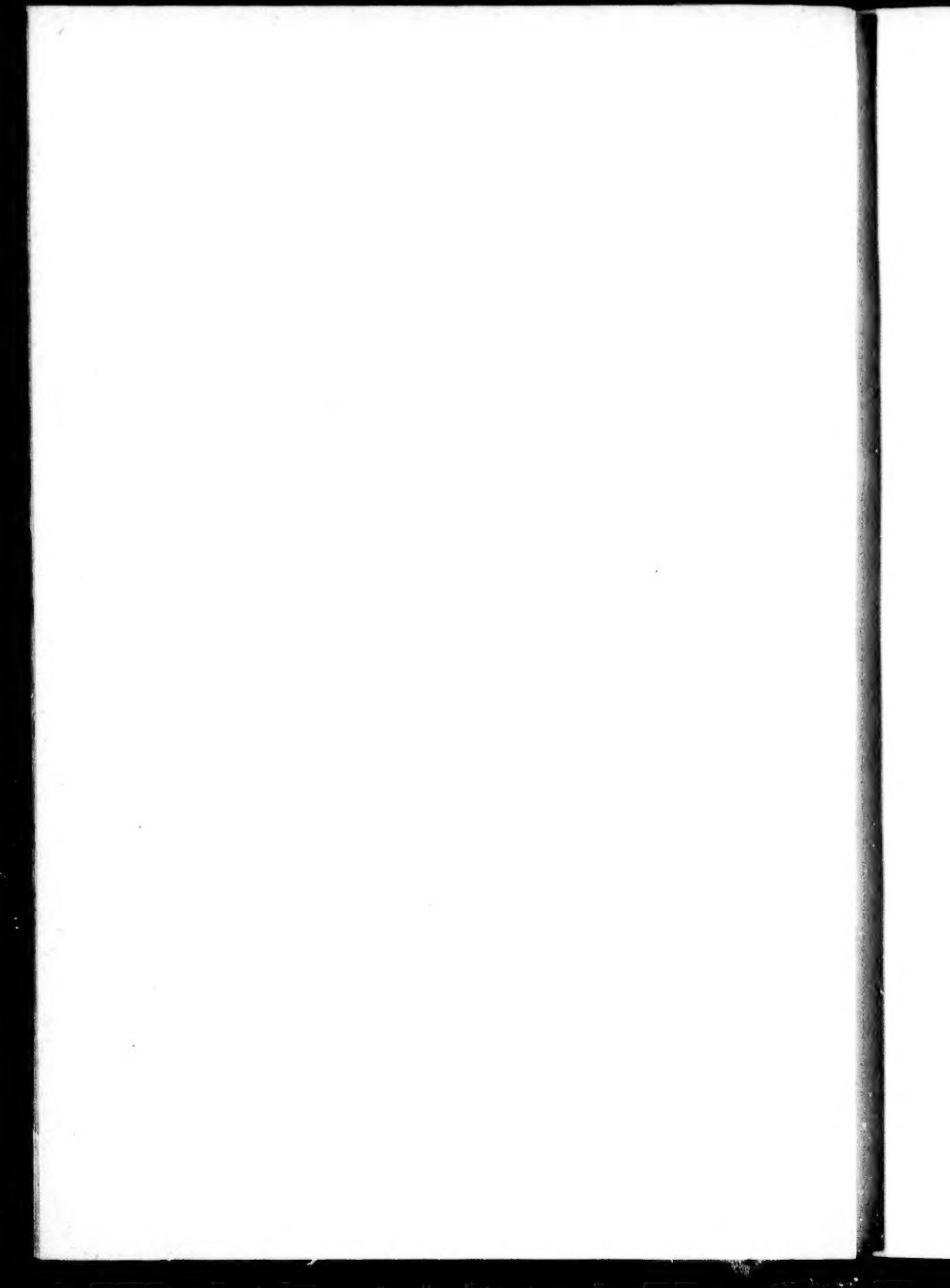
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Part I.

THE WHITE MEN.

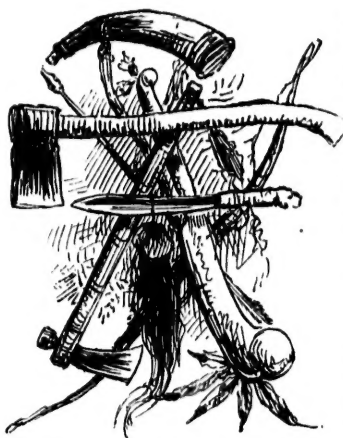
'I beheld the westward marches
Of the unknown, crowded nations.
All the land was full of people,
Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
In the woodlands rang their axes,
Smoked their towns in all the valleys,
Over all the lakes and rivers
Rushed their great canoes of thunder.'



THE MEN OF THE BACKWOODS.

CHAPTER I.

ROMANCE AND REALITY.



THERE is scarcely any young Englishman who has not read with delight the Indian stories of Fenimore Cooper and his host of rivals and imitators; but not so many are aware how little this kind of fiction is stranger than the truth on which it is based. For two centuries the ever-widening borders of the North American Colonies were the constant scene of exciting adventures, caused by the collision

between the hardy pioneers of civilisation and the native tribes fighting desperately against the fate which won their hunting grounds from them by fire and steel. There were no novelists or newspapers to record these romances of the wilderness; but round the camp fire in the forest, or the

rude hearth of the log cabin, they were told and retold to eager listeners, who knew not but that next moment they too might hear the war-whoop ringing about them, and have to seize axe and rifle to defend themselves from death or captivity. So the thrilling tales of frontier life soon passed into wide circulation, and came to be handed down as not the least proud and picturesque features of American history.

It is almost startling to consider how near to this romance are the sober facts of our own day. Just a century separates us from the most stirring times of the backwoods. When travelling over a country which now seems so prosaically prosperous, we find it hard to realize to ourselves how lately these peaceful streams have been stained with blood; that such busy and famous cities have sprung up so soon upon the wilds where the bloodthirsty savage made his ambush; that these very trees, sleeping so still in the moonlight among snug homesteads and rich fields, have echoed with shots and shrieks, and served as scenery for the darkest dramas, to which here and there bullets embedded in their hoary trunks may yet bear witness. The generation has not long died out that saw the Delaware and the Wyandot in his war-paint. It may well be that men are still living in Ohio or Kentucky with such a tale to tell as Judge Rowan, who died in 1843, could not but remember all his life—how when ten years old he came with his family to settle in the woods; how, as their boat drifted down the Ohio by night, they saw the fires of the Indians, and heard a fiendish uproar which made them think with a shudder that another party of emigrants had fallen into these pitiless hands; how the little crew of seven people prepared to sell their lives dearly; and how, in his own words, 'we entertained a faint hope that we might slip by unperceived. But they discovered us when we had got about midway of their fires, and commanded us to come to. We

were silent, for my father had given strict orders that no one should utter any sound but that of his rifle, and not that until the Indians should come within powder-burning distance. They united in a most terrific yell, and rushed to their canoes and pursued us. We floated on in silence—not an oar was pulled. They approached us within less than a hundred yards with a seeming determination to board us. Just at this moment my mother rose from her seat, collected the axes and placed one by the side of each man, where he stood with his gun, touching him on the knee with the handle of the axe as she leaned it up by him against the side of the boat, to let him know it was there, and retired to her seat, retaining a hatchet for herself.' After pursuing them for nearly three miles, the Indians could not find courage to come to close quarters with the resolute little band. And thus, as this brave mother used to say calmly, 'We made a providential escape for which we ought to feel grateful.'

Others might tell us how they came by land to their new home, travelling in large companies for safety, hearing the wild beasts howl round their nightly encampments, and seeing by the weary path the slain and mutilated bodies of their countrymen; no living soul to welcome them but the painted warrior hanging stealthily on their trail and only deterred by their numbers from immediate attack. Even should the dread of Indians be removed, there was the risk of starvation, the fever and ague, and yet other untried perils to be undergone beyond the mountains which shut out the wilderness from their familiar world.

Great were the difficulties and dangers, but still greater the courage and hope, of the men who first set their hands to the conquest of this mighty waste of woods. Ignorant and rough as most of them were, they had a noble faith in the future. Almost before they had a roof over their heads, they laid out

and named the towns which they never doubted to see take the place of cane brakes and coves. In 1782, General Clark led a successful expedition into the Indian country to avenge the defeat at Blue Licks. When they were returning, and had reached a desolate spot which might be called the centre of the continent, as then known, the companions in arms entered into a compact to meet there on the same day, fifty years after, as many of them as should be still alive, to fight these early battles over again, and to compare *now* with *then*. Half a century passed: the veterans did not forget their promise, and time had not befooled their hopes, for the place of meeting had become the city of Cincinnati, already beginning to boast that it was destined to grow into the greatest city of the world. But though several of the old comrades presented themselves at the rendezvous, the long-expected gathering was spoiled by an enemy more dreaded than the Indians, the cholera, which then for the first time appeared in America, and filled men's minds with too much anxiety for the present to let them rest on the past.

Things are indeed changed in what, a hundred years ago, was the 'back' country; but the early settlers are not forgotten by those who reap the harvest sown by them in such toils and dangers. Boone, Brady, Kenton, Wetzel, Fleeheart—such names are still household words in the States, where the fame of their deeds cannot but stir the blood of their grandsons. Every neighbourhood is proud to have its tale or tradition of the pioneer times. The very names of many places are a monument of some dashing exploit or some hairbreadth escape which, on this side the Atlantic, might pass for pure imagination.

An 'Indian' story is now almost proverbially a suspicious story, and we are not to believe all that these wandering hunters chose to say about themselves and their comrades.

In the following pages, however, care has been taken to dwell only on incidents which seem tolerably well authenticated in at least their main features. Of true tales and tragedies there could be no lack among people to whom a struggle for life or death might come in any day's work, and none of whom durst ever cross his threshold without being ready to play the hero. And for them life was too real a business to allow of much invention. Details may be distorted or exaggerated here and there, but a poet of the highest order could scarcely have imagined the touches of homely pathos and life-like force which give such a real interest to these stories of doing and suffering in the woods.

Many a tale must be omitted or hurriedly passed over, for it would pain us to dwell on their darkly-tragic features, thrown into grimmest relief by the familiar and often ludicrous circumstances of the case. It would take the pen of a consummate artist to make us either laugh or cry heartily over the story of the poor boy Jacob Fisher, who, being remarkably fat, was burned to death by a band of Indians before the eyes of his father and brothers, after being obliged to gather the wood for his own torture. There are even more sickeningly horrible cases, over which we leave the veil undrawn.

Women and children, too, were exposed to those perils which tried the strongest man's endurance. What must have been the agony of Mrs. Cunningham, held prisoner in a cave from which she could hear the voices of her friends seeking her without, while her fierce captors made her hold her child to her breast to still its cries! To what a fearful alternative was that mother reduced, who, after having the gory scalp of her husband dashed into her face, contrived to slink into the bushes, and fled from the helpless wail of her little one as the cruel savage dashed its head against a tree, saying, 'I will bring the cow to her calf!' There was another mother, a

negress, who, having escaped the attack of the Indians on the same occasion, brought herself to kill her own child, lest its complaints should bring the whooping fiends to her shelter. A woman has been made twice a widow by the Indian rifles; many have seen all their children killed one after another. We read of tender girls being dragged away to lifelong captivity among an abhorred race. Never, we are sure, could that young hunter have had a more exciting chase than when, with a resolute band of veterans of the woods, he sped along the stealthy trail of the redskins who were carrying his sweetheart to their distant wigwams. From page after page of such barely-stated incidents which might be collected, we can know how these rough hearts must have throbbed with every pang that goes to the quick in human nature.

And they could act as well as endure, these heroines of the West. Let Mrs. Merrill be our example here of a score of Amazons whose names are not forgotten. At midnight, her husband heard his dog bark, and opened the door of his Kentucky cabin, only to be shot down by five or six Indians. As he fell, he called on his wife to shut the door. She did so, and seized an axe. Then, as the enemy tried to enter at the breach which they made with their tomahawks, she cut down four of them one after another. Then they mounted the roof and tried to get down the chimney. But the fire was still smouldering; Mrs. Merrill tore open the bed and heaped the feathers on the burning logs, raising such a smoke that two red men came tumbling down, and the axe did not let them get on their feet. Only one of the assailants was now left, who made another attempt on the door, but went howling off with a gash on his face to bear witness among his tribe to the prowess of the 'long-knife squaw.' A stern story this, but it was stern facts these settlers had to deal with.

And the sons of such mothers learned betimes to play the

man. Witness two little Welsh boys named Perry, eleven and nine years old, who, their parents having fallen sick while away from home, spent a whole long winter alone in the woods, in a newly-built cabin without fireplace or chimney. They were surrounded by Indians, and fifteen miles from the nearest settlers. They had no gun, and no food but what they could get, and were, moreover, strangers to this wild life; yet they made shift to live on rabbits which they caught in hollow logs, on part of a deer which the wolves had killed near them, and on some corn meal that now and then they trudged to fetch all the way from their next neighbours. And thus, we are told, they not only struggled through eight months, some of them of unusually severe cold, but had done a good piece of clearing to astonish their father when at last he was able to return to the cabin, scarcely expecting to find them alive.

So much as introduction to a series of true pictures of which no fictitious colouring could heighten the effect. We know now what we may expect from our subject; yet, before passing on to its prominent scenes and stories, here is another little glimpse which will show us how deep were some of the shadows of life in the backwoods.

In Pennsylvania, more than a hundred years ago, a solitary log cabin stood upon the brow of a gloomy ravine, enclosed by hills and dark pine woods. This was the little schoolhouse of the district, at which the children of the settlers picked up their A, B, C when work and weather permitted. It was situated so far back from the dangerous frontiers, that in ordinary times these little Red Riding-hoods might go between it and their homes without much fear of meeting wolves in human shape.

One morning, it is said, several of the children, who perhaps crept unwillingly enough to school at the best of times, showed

an unusually strong reluctance to leave home, as if a presentiment of evil had been in the air. Ten scholars, however, made their appearance at the schoolhouse. Two of them brought the story that they had seen Indians in coming through the woods, but the master paid no attention. 'Seeing Indians' was likely to be a frequent plea for a holiday.

So lessons went on as usual, till the door was pushed open, and there entered no belated scholar, no trembling truant, but the bronzed figures and fierce faces of a scalping-party. Their intentions were soon made plain. The last words the master spoke were entreating them to take his life, but to spare the children.

Later in the day, a man who happened to pass by was struck not to hear either the hum of tasks or the boisterous cries of playtime. Curiosity led him to look into the schoolhouse, and he saw a horrible sight. In the centre was the poor dominie, his scalp gone and a Bible in his lifeless hands. Round him lay the bodies of his tender flock, all miserably mutilated. In one only some faint signs of life were found, and he entirely recovered; the rest, tradition declared, were buried close by in one grave and one coffin. About the middle of this century the place was dug up, and there were the bones of a man and of a number of young persons which appeared to have been laid in a large, roughly-constructed box.

One version of the story, professing to be derived from the single survivor, is that the murders were committed by an Indian boy with a club of wood, his elders standing by to encourage and protect him in the bloody work. Another account is that they were all mere lads. It is said that when they returned to the tribe and boasted of their exploit, they were not praised, but severely rebuked by the seniors, who pronounced this slaughter of children a cowardly action, unworthy of warriors.

CHAPTER II.

A GIANT-KILLER OF THE BACKWOODS.



WE might choose almost at random among the true tales of the backwoods, but we cannot do better than begin with the famous life or death struggle between Andrew Poe and a huge Wyandot Indian, a story in which we may see a myth in the making—one, indeed, which, if it had happened a thousand years ago, would by this time have grown into a legend as marvellous as any of the old romances. But it is

only a hundred years since Andrew and his brother Adam were in the prime of life, sturdy, active backwoodsmen: the former fresh and ruddy, as became his English stock; and the other with more of that hard, dry look which is associated with the American type of manhood. Like bold, stirring spirits that they were, they fixed their cabin among the woods of the Ohio, then the boundary between the frontier settlements and the Indians. When either race crossed that

stream, the chances were that hatred and mourning followed on their trail, and new additions were made, in figures of blood, to the mutual debt of vengeance.

One summer, six or seven Wyandots made a raid on the American side, and, among other outrages, killed a defenceless old man in his cabin. As soon as this was known, the indignant settlers hurried together. The marauders had of course made off with all speed, but eight men volunteered to pursue them. Andrew was chosen as leader; his elder brother Adam was of the party, but where so much depended on the shrewdness and smartness of their captain, these ready-made soldiers did not hesitate about obeying him whom they took to be the best man.

Without delay they set off, hoping to make up with the Indians before they could cross the Ohio and save themselves by their common device of separating and going different ways, so as to puzzle their pursuers. After marching through the night, they struck next morning on the Indian trail, and recognised the enormous moccasin prints of a redoubtable Wyandot chief, called Bigfoot, who was said to be about seven feet high, and strong in proportion. This discovery urged them to press on, and they arrived at the river without seeing anything of the enemy.

Here the trail led them for some distance along the bank. Suddenly it turned sharp off, and seemed to be leading back again from the river. But Andrew Poe knew too much of the ways of Indians to be deceived by their cunning. He guessed that they were lying in ambush somewhere not far off; so, telling his comrades to follow the trail, he himself proceeded cautiously along the side of the stream, where he expected, if his guess was right, to be able to take the enemy in the rear.

Creeping, with all the caution of a hunter, through the

willows and low bushes, he gained a point from which he could see two canoes lying empty on the shore. He looked to the priming of his rifle and moved on. Now he stopped again, as he heard the sound of voices close before him; then, gliding forward like a serpent, he found himself on the edge of a high rock, below which the speakers were sitting at their ease on the shore. He peeped over and drew his breath. There was the bulky form of the Indian giant, unsuspectingly chatting with another Indian, who looked almost dwarfish beside him. They were not twenty yards from the muzzle of his rifle.

Bigfoot little knew what a sure aim was being taken at his heart, till a familiar snap struck upon his ear and ran through him like an electric shock. The piece had missed fire! With an ejaculation, the startled Indians sprang to their feet and were aware of the white man crouching among the leaves and grass above. For a moment all three remained motionless, staring at each other. But Poe's quick wit told him that something must be done at once. The bushes behind were too thick to let him get off, with the haste that was now needed; so he dropped his useless rifle, and before the Indians had come out of their astonishment, jumped right upon the big one, knocking him over, and at the same time throwing his arms around the neck of the other and dragging him to the ground. There all three lay struggling in a heap, while the sound of firing close by announced that their companions had now fallen in with each other.

The huge chief was half stunned by the force of this sudden downfall, and Poe managed to keep them both underneath him for a short time; but it was all he could do, and he could not get at his knife. Bigfoot soon recovered and turned the tables, locking his long arms like the folds of a boa-constrictor round poor Andrew, who was obliged to

let go the other Indian. His fate now seemed sealed. The small Indian ran for a tomahawk which was lying on the ground; he durst not use a rifle for fear of shooting his own comrade. The chief held Andrew as in a vice, and the other came up to knock him on the head like a sheep at the shambles. But Andrew had his feet free, and just as the small Indian was about to strike, he gave him a kick which sent the tomahawk flying from his hand and the man himself sprawling into the river.

Bigfoot uttered an exclamation of contempt for his comrade's awkwardness, and kept shouting to him to come and finish the business. It was hard work holding his struggling prisoner, who was determined not to be butchered thus if he could help it. Up came the Indian again, brandishing the weapon, dodging about, and feinting in a style which showed that he was not very sure about dealing with Andrew even in his present helpless condition. At last he struck at his head, but the quick-eyed backwoodsman, shackled as he was, contrived to catch the blow on his arm, with no worse injury than a cut across the wrist. Then with a desperate effort he broke loose, and before he could be seized again, snatched up a loaded gun and shot the small Indian dead.

Bigfoot leaped to his feet also, just an instant too late. He threw himself on the white man, one hand on his shoulder, another on his leg, and once more hurled him down. Before he could do more, Andrew was up and at him again. Neither was able to reach a weapon; they took to their fists. The Indian was likely to get the worst of it at this game, so he closed and they locked their arms about each other's brawny forms. Muscles strained to the utmost, furious eyes starting out of their heads, and lips set in the agony of desperation, the two heroes wrestled together in such a struggle as that of Scott's famous champions:—

'Now, gallant Saxon, hold thy own !
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown !
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel !
They tug—they strain—down, down they go !'

And down went Andrew and Bigfoot, unable to keep their footing on the slippery bank, rolling into the river, still fast held in each other's clutches.

This only changed the scene of the struggle from land to water. Each combatant put forth all his strength to drown his adversary, and now one, now the other seemed to gain the upper hand. At last, however, Poe contrived to catch the Indian by his long scalp-lock, and held him firmly under water till his huge body lay still and unresisting. Then, breathless and bleeding, the victor let go his hold and turned to the bank, thinking the fight was over.

But the wily chief had only been 'playing possum,' as the hunter's phrase is. He was quite alive and wide awake. Here he was on his feet again, making another dash at Andrew, who had once more to tussle with him for his own life. And now in their fierce wrestling they carried one another out into deep water, where they were both like to be drowned in real earnest, if they did not swim for it. They relaxed their grasp as if by common consent, and struck out for the bank.

Each had the same thought in his mind. There were two rifles lying on the shore ; one of them was still loaded ; whichever reached it first was almost certain to win the deadly game. So with their mightiest strokes they raced towards the shore. Poor Andrew ! he soon found that in this trial he was no match for the redskin, at home in the water from his infancy. But the white man was not at the end of his devices. When he saw that the Indian must get to land

first, he quickly turned and swam out again into the stream, that he might escape the shot by diving.

At this juncture up ran his brother Adam. Andrew shouted to him to shoot the Indian. Ah! but his gun was empty. Bigfoot reached the shore, and with a shout of exultation bounded upon a rifle. Yet fortune had still a turn in her wheel for the white men. As luck would have it, he took up not the rifle which was still loaded, but the one with which Andrew had shot his companion.

Now it was which would load first, Adam or the Indian. The end of this race would be the death of one or other of them, for they were only a few yards apart. With frantic haste each began to pour in his charge, and if ever a backwoodsman prayed, Andrew Poe must have prayed Heaven to lend speed to his brother's elbow.

The question was settled in half the time that might be expected. Bigfoot rammed down his powder, but in his excitement he handled his ramrod so violently that it jumped out of his too eager hand and fell into the water. Quick as lightning he saw that it was all over with him. The bullet that must kill him was down before he could repair his mistake. They say that he threw away his gun, turned to the foe, opened his shirt, and calmly received the fatal ball in his breast, that he might die like a true brave.

In the meantime an unfortunate mistake had been made. Another of Poe's party running up to the edge of the high bank and seeing a figure covered with blood in the water, thought it was an Indian trying to escape. Without stopping to look twice, he fired and wounded Andrew. As soon as Adam had disposed of the enemy, he hurried into the stream to assist his brother. But Andrew, even at that moment, thinking more of the honour of the exploit than of his own safety, called out not to mind him but to make sure of Big-

foot. It was too late. Even in the pangs of death the Indian's mind was set on saving his scalp from the hands of the conquerors; with his last strength he rolled himself into the river, and his huge body was borne away by the current as Andrew got to the shore dripping and bleeding.

While this struggle was going on, the white men had killed all the Indians but one, losing three of their own number, so the victory was signally complete. Seldom, in this kind of fighting, were so many lives lost out of the number on either side. It is said that the slain Indians were all brothers of Bigfoot, and almost as gigantic in stature; but this is a feature of the story so very likely to be added after the model of those good old nursery tales which were great favourites with the simple backwoodsmen, that we may suspect it to be not altogether undue to their imagination.

Andrew Poe recovered from his wounds, and lived for half a century yet to tell of the terrible hug from which he had so narrowly escaped. The old man was fond of acting the combat with such earnestness and so violent bodily exertions, that the sight is described as having been painful to look on. Not many years ago the Indian's tomahawk was still in the possession of his son, who, though himself a deacon and a man of peace, was none the less proud to exhibit this token of his father's prowess; and in a country where there are so few antiquities, it is not likely to be lost sight of by the family.

The death of Bigfoot and his comrades was a great blow to their tribe, as they were all distinguished warriors. Nor was it all gain to the settlers. The whole tribe of the Wyandots were known for their comparative kindness to the white men who fell into their hands, but Bigfoot had been specially remarkable for something of that chivalrous disposition which so well became his strength and courage. He had helped to

save prisoners from the horrors of the torture and the stake, and in other ways shown himself humane for a savage.

It was not in Indian nature to let such an injury be forgotten or forgiven. Though cowed at the time by the misfortune which had fallen upon them, the Wyandot warriors long cherished secret hopes of revenge, and till these should be fulfilled believed that the spirit of their great kinsman could not rest in peace. Many years afterwards, when the settlers had ceased to fear danger from their red neighbours, the tribe determined to murder Andrew Poe, and a chief named Rohn-yen-ness was chosen to do the treacherous deed.

How he performed his errand, as related by the Rev. James B. Finley, a missionary who had gained great influence over this man and others of his tribe, will form a pleasing pendant to such a tale of bloodshed :—

‘He went to Poe’s house and was met with great friendship. Poe not having any suspicion of his design, the best in his house was furnished him. When the time to retire to sleep came, he made a pallet on the floor for his Indian guest. He and his wife went to bed in the same room. Rohn-yen-ness said they both soon fell asleep. There being no person about the house but some children, this afforded him a fair opportunity to have executed his purpose. But the kindness they had both shown him worked in his mind ; he asked himself how he could get up and kill even an enemy that had taken him in and treated him so well—so much like a brother ? The more he thought about it, the worse he felt ; but still, on the other hand, he was sent by his nation to avenge the death of two of its most valiant warriors, and their ghosts would not be appeased until the blood of Poe was shed. There, he said, he lay in this conflict of mind until about midnight. The duty he owed to his nation and the spirits of his departed friends aroused him. He seized his knife and tomahawk, and

crept to the bedside of his sleeping host. Again the kindness he had received from Poe stared him in the face, and he said, "It is mean, it is unworthy the character of an Indian warrior, to kill even an enemy who has so kindly treated him." He went back to his pallet and slept till morning.

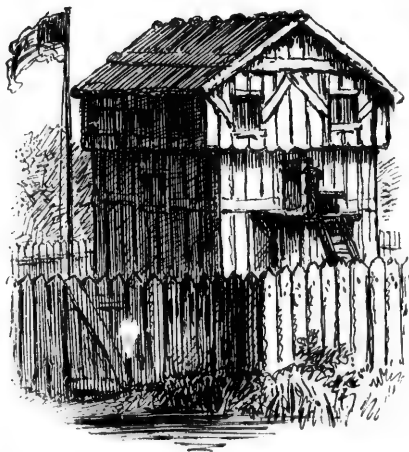
'His kind host loaded him with blessings, and told him that they were once enemies, but now they had buried the hatchet and were brothers, and hoped they would always be so. Rohn-yen-ness, overwhelmed with a sense of the generous treatment he had received from his once-powerful enemy, but now his kind friend, left him to join his party.'

Alas! there are too few such bright spots in the dark chronicle of the white and the red man's dealings with each other.



CHAPTER III.

THE FRONTIER FORTS.



THE enemies with whom the backwoodsmen had to deal were less capable of carrying on a sustained system of military operations than of waging war in a fashion which, to our ideas, seemed more like robbery and murder on a large scale. Fighting was with the Indians mainly a

matter of stealthy tricks and surprises; and often a single check or a trifling loss was enough to make them beat a hasty retreat. If they set out a hundred strong, this was a formidable force; then, as they approached the scene of action, they would often split up into small scalping parties, to fall separately upon the scattered farms and cabins of the white people. These braves aimed at secrecy as well as bloodshed, and, daring as they could be in time of need, showed an amount

of caution in running risks which was little in harmony with the chivalrous notions of European warriors. And as their object was to make a dash, with greatly superior numbers, upon some exposed point of the settlements, so the inhabitants soon learned to prepare defences to meet such tactics.

The characteristic features of this warfare are found nowhere more fully displayed than in the sieges which took place during the revolutionary war, in what was then 'the far west' of Pennsylvania and Virginia. The Indians of that region, living in a state of chronic hostility towards the newcomers, were only too ready to seek gratification for their savage instincts in taking service under a civilised government which could arm but not control them. The white inhabitants of the frontier, almost to a man, were on the side of the United States, and suffered terribly for their cause. For us it should be painful to think what atrocities were committed by Indians marching under the British flag, and sometimes even accompanied by British soldiers. But for the most part this out-of-the-way war was not carried on by regular troops or long campaigns. On both sides the combatants fought by fits and starts as they had leisure and provocation; it was the old story of incursions and reprisals, short and sharp attacks, hasty retreats and eager pursuits, with many a deed of individual prowess, and now and then a battle of at the most some few hundred men on both sides.

To the inhabitants of the 'back' settlements, these incursions were matters of course, as much to be expected as bad weather or infectious diseases by ordinary farmers. They did their best to be prepared for them, then went about their daily business as well as they could, and with minds which seem to have been wonderfully cheerful considering the circumstances. Too often the first warning which these poor

people had of the coming of their hated foe, was the murderous crack of an unseen rifle, or the yell which bid them lay down tool or burden and run for their lives from the swift-footed marauders. But this continual dread taught them to keep a keen watch, and as soon as warning was given, they knew how to seek shelter and mutual help. At the first news of danger a gun would be fired, or messengers hastily sent out to gather every family into the nearest fort or fortified house.

In a neighbourhood exposed to such attacks, the first thing done was to make some such place of refuge. It would be perhaps a square stockade enclosing a group of cabins, or the wall might be formed by the backs of a row of log huts, with a bastion or a blockhouse at each corner. The blockhouses were lumbering, topheavy-looking erections, strongly built, the upper storey projecting over the ground floor, so that no assailants could climb up the wall or even approach it with impunity; and the shingled roof, which was in danger of being set on fire by firebrands or blazing arrows, had an opening through which the garrison could pour water on the flames without exposing themselves. Every side of these rude citadels and the stockades were of course well furnished with loopholes. Sometimes a single blockhouse with two or three cabins would be found large enough to hold all the neighbours. A very small garrison inside, if well furnished with supplies, and able to make a spirited resistance, could generally hold out till relief arrived. There are many records of stubborn and successful defences against great odds, for the Indians were bad hands at a siege when they had to do with men not to be deceived by the tricks and decoys which they seldom failed to put into practice.

The Rev. Dr. Doddridge, whose boyhood was spent on the outskirts of Western Virginia in the middle of last century, has given us some curious and interesting reminiscences of a

state of life which, whatever its other drawbacks, must have been remarkably free from dulness and monotony.

'The fort to which my father belonged,' he says, 'was, during the first years of the war, three-quarters of a mile from his farm; but when this fort went to decay, and became unfit for defence, a new one was built at his own house. I well remember that, when a little boy, the family were sometimes waked up in the dead of night by an express with a report that the Indians were at hand. The express came softly to the door or back window, and by a gentle tapping waked the family. This was easily done, as an habitual fear made us ever watchful and sensible to the slightest alarm. The whole family were instantly in motion. My father seized his gun and other implements of war. My stepmother waked up and dressed the children as well as she could; and being myself the oldest of the children, I had to take my share of the burdens to be carried to the fort. There was no possibility of getting a horse in the night to aid us in removing to the fort. Besides the little children, we caught up what articles of clothing and provision we could get hold of in the dark, for we durst not light a candle or even stir the fire. All this was done with the utmost despatch and the silence of death. The greatest care was taken not to awake the youngest child; to the rest it was enough to say *Indian*: not a whimper was heard afterwards. Thus it often happened that the whole number of families belonging to a fort, who were in the evening at their homes, were all in their little fortress before the dawn of the next morning. In the course of the succeeding day, their household furniture was brought in by parties of the men under arms.'

In another place the same writer describes the scene within the fort when an attack was expected. The experienced Indian fighter, recognised by the rest as captain, makes a short

speech, bidding his garrison play the man, reminding them of the horrors which they and theirs must expect in case of defeat, and giving them practical hints as to the management of their arms. Then this homespun commander takes stock of the ammunition and looks to the weapons. The women receive instructions to have all the vessels filled with water against the chance of the wooden defences being set on fire. Hoes, mattocks, and axes are laid handy for use if the assailants should manage to break into the fort and come to close quarters; polished swords would be worth little in such a struggle. Everything that can be thought of is done to give the enemy a warm reception as soon as he comes for it.

In this case the preparations proved unnecessary; but the alarm was not a false one, for a blockhouse not far off was attacked by a hundred Indians. It was gallantly defended by half a dozen men, one of whom was killed almost at the first fire.

'The Indians had surrounded the place before they were discovered, but they were still at some distance. When discovered, the alarm was given, on which every man ran to his cabin for his gun, and took refuge in the blockhouse. The Indians answering the alarm by a war-whoop from their whole line, commenced firing and running towards the fort from every direction. It was evidently their intention to take the place by assault; but the fire of the Indians was answered by that of six brave and skilful sharpshooters. This unexpected reception prevented the intended assault, and made the Indians take refuge behind logs, stumps, and trees. The firing continued with little intermission for about four hours.

'In the intervals of the firing, the Indians frequently called out to the people of the fort, "Give up, give up; too many Indian! Indian too big! no kill!"

'They were answered with defiance. "Come on, you

cowards! we are ready for you. Show us your yellow hides, and we will make holes in them for you."

'During the evening, many of the Indians at some distance from the fort amused themselves by shooting the horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep, until the bottom was strewn with their dead bodies. About ten o'clock at night the Indians set fire to a barn about thirty yards from the fort. The barn was large and full of grain and hay. The flame was frightful, and at first it seemed to endanger the burning of the fort, but the barn stood on lower ground than the fort. The night was calm, with the exception of a slight breeze up the creek. This carried the flame and burning splinters in a different direction, so that the burning of the barn, which at first was regarded as a dangerous if not fatal occurrence, proved in the issue the means of throwing a strong light to a great distance in every direction; so that the Indians durst not approach the fort to set fire to the cabins, which they might have done at little risk under cover of darkness.

'After the barn was set on fire, the Indians collected on the side of the fort opposite the barn, so as to have the advantage of the light, and kept up a pretty constant fire, which was as steadily answered by that of the fort, until about two o'clock, when the Indians left the place and made a hasty retreat.'

This retreat, it afterwards appeared, was mainly due to a diversion made by a few white men, who had been too late to get into the fort before it was surrounded, but were now making a gallant effort to join their friends. The Indians did well to be off in such good time. By ten o'clock next morning, sixty men had collected, and were hotly following on their trail; but separating into small parties, and taking various paths, they contrived to baffle the pursuit.

If the enemy could approach without warning, the settlers might find themselves suddenly beset in their houses. There

are tales of small log cabins turned into fortresses, and held by two or three bold men for hours against enormous odds. Fancy the alarm : the rush into the frail shelter ; the hasty barring of the door ; the cries of some member of the family shut out, and abandoned, perforce, to the mercy of the foe ; the sickening despair of wife or mother, who had to hear these cries in helpless agony ; the firm-set faces of fathers and brothers determined to sell their lives dearly ! Rails and logs are torn down from the new-made fence, and driven as battering-rams at the stout door, but the assailants are careful not to come within range of the windows ; then those within tear the mortar out of the chinks, and from between the logs the deadly rifle bullets go straight to their mark. The Indians fall back, maddened by their loss, but soon return to the attack with more fearful weapons. Burning faggots are hurled upon the roof, lighted brushwood or straw is piled up against the wall, a hideous din of triumph rises with the flames. The crafty red men retire out of the widening ring of light into their covers, and leave the fire to do its work. The little garrison exhausts all its resources against this danger, the water in the cabin is soon spent, pails of milk are poured upon the flames, the earth is scraped up from the floor for the same purpose ; perhaps, by a combined effort, they are able to lift off the burning roof, and to hurl it down with a cheer of defiance. At last, scorched, half stifled, half blinded, it may well be that they can bear it no longer. They break out, and make a dash across the clearing, with ten chances to one of being shot down before reaching the friendly darkness, where also the tomahawk may be lying in wait for the breathless fugitive. No man could ever forget such a night who had been able to hold out against this storm of fire, lead, and steel, till their assailants, haply discouraged by the death of the foremost warriors and the obstinacy of the defenders,

might slink away with the daylight, or till the boom of a great gun through the woods announced that their plight was known, and help at hand.

The inhabitants of a district were often obliged to remain in their forts for weeks together, sometimes all the summer. The winter was their season of comparative security, when they might count on the severe weather as their best friend, keeping the Indians at home. The spell of mild weather which frequently comes at the end of autumn is said to have got its name of the 'Indian summer,' because it gave the enemy another opportunity of taking a long journey without the risk of leaving a clear trail on the snow, and making a final raid on the settlements before he retired into his winter quarters. Thus this tender time, so rich in beautiful and poetic associations to our minds, was nothing but a name of dread and distress to the first clearers of these gorgeous autumn forests.

It will readily be imagined that a timid or nervous man would not choose the life of a pioneer in the backwoods. All able-bodied men had to be soldiers after a fashion; the boys began early. Doddridge tells us that at the age of thirteen or fourteen he slept at the fort with his gun beside him, and had his assigned post, to which he would run at the first call of danger. The women learned to forget the natural fears of their sex. While the fight was raging round them, they would not only attend to the wounded, but go on quietly cutting bullet patches, moulding bullets, carrying water, cooling guns, loading them; they might even, at a pinch, take their places at an embrasure, and show that they could pull a trigger as well as the men. Here is a story which shows of what stuff the mothers of Ohio and Kentucky were made. The incident related took place during the revolutionary war in the district significantly known as 'the dark and bloody ground,' which at that time was the scene of many a dreadful

deed, as it had long been nothing but an unpopulated battlefield for rival tribes :—

A common and rather surprising mistake in building these forts was to leave them dependent for their supply of water upon a spring outside of, or even at some distance from, the walls. This was the case with a certain place known as Bryant's Station, which one night was silently surrounded by several hundred Indians. They lay waiting for daylight, intending, as soon as the gates should be opened, to make a rush to get within the defences.

It so happened that the garrison, unsuspecting of their own danger, were on the point of marching off to succour a neighbouring station, which they believed to be the threatened point. If the Indians would only have lain quiet, they might, in a few hours, have found no one to resist them except old men, women, and children. But, seeing lights moving about in the cabins and blockhouses through the night, they mistook this bustle of preparation for departure for a sign that their presence was discovered, and, changing their former plan, hit upon a stratagem which did them no great service.

At daybreak, just as the garrison were about to march off, a small party of Indians came into view, whooping, yelling, and making frantic gestures of hostility. When this demonstration was seen from the fort, some of the young men were for sallying out and falling upon the little band, who seemed to be so rashly provoking them to an encounter. But the cool old heads knew better. Judging that it was not without reason that these Indians departed from their usual cautious manner of making war, they rightly guessed that a much stronger force was lying in ambush somewhere or other, and that, instead of making a sally, they would do well to prepare for a siege.

But not expecting such an attack, they were very ill supplied

with water. How were they to get more from the spring, which was a good way off, and under the rifles, no doubt, of the concealed foe? It was probable that the Indians would not disclose themselves till it was worth their while, and it was on the other side of the fort that the decoy party had appeared. So it was proposed that the women should all go out in a body, as they were accustomed to do in the mornings, each with a bucket to fetch water for the use of the garrison.

The ladies of the fort were at first not much charmed with this plan, but their good sense told them that it was a wise one; whereas, if some of the men went to draw water, the Indians might understand that their ambushade was suspected, and would not delay to open fire. So young and old made up their minds to do what was required of them.

The whole body filed out and marched down to the spring. Some of the younger ones looked white enough, and were ready to start at every cracking of a twig, but most of these women bore themselves so coolly as they passed within shot of five hundred muzzles, that the ambushed Indians were quite deceived, and supposing that the garrison did not perceive their trap, restrained their bloodthirsty impatience for a little longer. The buckets were filled without interruption. Then the women took their way back, and though, as they neared the gate, they showed some inclination to make a run for it, like a flock of frightened sheep, their movements were on the whole so steady that very little of the water was spilt.

Thus supplied, the garrison had now little to fear. They sent out a party to act as a counter decoy, and when the Indians, thinking their time had at last come, started up, and were for making a charge on the fort, which they believed to be now undefended, every loophole became alive in a style which made them soon glad to sink into their cover again.

This is far from being the only story of exploits done in

these wars by women and girls. Here is another, from which many boys would have shrunk, and thought no shame of themselves :—

In 1782, the frontier settlement of Wheeling, on the Ohio, was attacked by an unusually large body of Indians. The inhabitants of the village, warned in time, took refuge in the fort, where were about twenty able-bodied men, under the command of Colonel Silas Zane, with twice as many women, children, and invalids. His brother, Colonel Ebenezer Zane, remained in his own house, about forty yards off. It contained a quantity of stores, which there was no time to remove, and the inmates, some seven or eight men and women, were confident of being able to defend it. Indeed, it proved most useful as an outwork from which to annoy the assailants of the fort.

The Indians, trusting to their numbers, attacked fiercely, but were again and again driven back. Through the night they tried to set fire to Ebenezer Zane's house, which was frustrated by the vigilance of the defenders. Next day they made a still less successful attempt to imitate the methods of civilised warfare. There was a small cannon mounted on the roof of a house in the fort ; this gun had played such a part in the defence that they had good reason to look upon it with respect, as, indeed, they did on all artillery. They had captured a boat loaded with cannon balls for a detachment of American troops. Casting about for means of turning these to account, they got a great log, hollowed it out, bound it round with chains, which they found in one of the cabins, and thus manufactured a rude piece of artillery, that, as they imagined, would soon make a breach in the palisades of the fort. But when, having loaded it heavily, they applied a match, the log, of course, burst in the middle of them, killing and wounding many, and giving all a fright which would

hinder them from meddling with such machines for the future.

Soon, however, they recovered from this disaster, and returned with fresh fury to the assault. The garrison still received them with a close and deadly fire from both house and fort. There were plenty of weapons. The women moulded bullets, loaded guns, passed them to their husbands and brothers, and these practised backwoodsmen hurled death from every loophole without losing one of their own number throughout the siege.

But when the enemy had once more fallen back, it was discovered with alarm that only a few charges of powder were left in the fort. It had not been used for some time; the ammunition was kept in Ebenezer Zane's house, from which the defenders of the fort had brought away only as much as they thought would be needed, not anticipating such a long and hot fight. What was to be done now? The Indians might be expected to renew their onset at any moment; and if once they learned the deficiency of the garrison, these brave people would soon be overpowered fighting hand to hand with irresistibly superior numbers. The stockade was decayed and broken down in several places, so that if the enemy could but get at it, there would be little difficulty in forcing an entrance.

In this emergency there seemed nothing for it but that one of them should dash out to Ebenezer Zane's house, where there was plenty of powder, get a keg, and bring it back under the fire of the besiegers. There were several volunteers for this daring service, which seemed almost certain death when the woods and houses around were filled with keen-sighted, angry red men.

Among those who were willing to run such a risk was a girl—the Zanes' sister Elizabeth. She had just come back from school at Philadelphia, and was untried in the stirring scenes

of frontier life ; but her spirit made up for her inexperience. When her friends tried to dissuade her, urging that a man, being able to run quicker, would be in less danger, she nobly replied that, on the other hand, a man's life was worth more in the present circumstances. 'You have not a man to spare ; a woman will not be missed in the defence of the fort.' This was too true. It was agreed that the brave girl should go. Throwing off such clothes as would hinder her speed, she stood ready at the gate. It was flung open, and she rushed out on her desperate errand.

'A squaw ! a squaw !' cried the Indians, taken so much by surprise that they did not fire a shot. She bounded across the open space, and arrived unhurt at the house. Breathlessly she explained the reason of her coming. Her brother made haste to fasten a tablecloth round her waist, and emptied into it a keg of powder. Then she set out upon her return. This time the Indians were on the alert. She had to run the gauntlet of their balls, but not one touched her. Her anxious friends received her at the gate with her precious burden, and a shout of defiance told the Indians that the danger was over.

They still remained round the fort, and made several other attempts to storm it, but with no better success. After having suffered heavy loss, on the third day they retreated, giving up as hopeless the siege, which would probably have ended far otherwise but for the heroism of a girl.

It ought to be said that some confusion exists as to the details of this occurrence ; and it has been asserted that the real heroine was one Molly Scott. We have followed the commoner account, which gives the credit of the exploit to Elizabeth Zane. In reading the stories of that stirring time, we cannot doubt that there were many women in the backwoods who would have played such a part, if need were. Pity that there

was no bard to record more accurately the name and fame of the doers of these everyday deeds !

It has been shown that the Indians did not often succeed against rough blockhouses defended only by a few men. Still less had they the resolution, patience, and discipline necessary to take more important posts, scientifically fortified, armed with cannon and garrisoned by regular troops, though such a garrison did not count for so much in a kind of fighting where any hardy rifleman was as good as a veteran soldier, and better, if he knew the country. As distant settlements were made in the interior, they would be connected with the older colonies by a chain of such forts, which often stood hundreds of miles from each other in the woods, serving as shelter for a few white traders and their half-breed families, as well as hotels for travellers in these secluded regions. We may be sure that the little party of soldiers stationed in them would be glad to see any strangers, for their own life must have been somewhat dull ; they durst not always go out to hunt, and they had little else to do but mount guard and work in their gardens. But they counted their scalps tolerably safe, unless they allowed themselves to be decoyed into the woods by the Indians, or unless an army of civilised troops came to attack them with artillery. Cannon would soon batter down their wooden defences ; but, luckily for the defenders, cannon could not easily be moved about in a country where the chief means of travelling were paddling in bark canoes, and trudging through almost pathless forests.

A remarkable exception to the usual rules and results of an Indian campaign was afforded by the war known as that of the Conspiracy of Pontiac. This celebrated chief of the Ottawas was no ordinary man. By force of character, he had contrived to gain not only an unusual degree of power among his own

people, but a wide influence over the other tribes of the Upper Lakes; he was a very king of the West. And as he was able to wield an extraordinary authority among his own countrymen, so, for an Indian, he was gifted with extraordinary powers of mind. He saw clearly what must be the end of all this encroachment by the white man, and not so clearly he perceived the nature and value of that political union which was the real strength of the invaders. There grew up in his mind a fixed purpose to establish his own power, and to save his people from the fate that has since overtaken them. And when the tide of English emigration reached the hunting-grounds of his fathers, he met it with the historical exclamation, '*I stand in the path!*'

The long struggle between the French and the English in the New World was over, and the fall of Quebec had led to all Canada being transferred to the British flag. This exchange was by no means agreeable to the natives. The French had always made themselves much greater favourites with the Indian tribes, while their rivals, as we are said to have a knack of doing, had become no less disliked than feared, through their rough, and inconsiderate, and often unjust treatment of the conquered red man. When the hated race appeared in the character of their sole master, there was great excitement among the tribes, and they listened readily to bold spirits such as Pontiac, telling them that now or never they must make a stand for what was slipping away from them day by day. A widespread conspiracy, with Pontiac at the head, was entered into. When the Indians did agree, their unanimity was wonderful, as the saying is; and now several tribes along the lakes and the course of the Ohio laid aside their old jealousies and grudges, and were willing to unite for driving out the common oppressor. They foolishly hoped for assistance from the beaten French, not understanding how a civilised nation is

bound by treaties, and can rise above the barbarous thirst of revenge at the first opportunity. In this hope the plot was hurried on. North and south, east and west, Pontiac sent the great war-belt of purple and black wampum, like the fiery cross of the Highlanders, to summon his allies, and in many a camp the boldest warriors were preparing their war-paint and plumes for the appointed day, while, with deep cunning, they dissembled their fierce intentions before the white men with whom they had dealings.

Signs of the approaching storm were not wanting. Rumours and warnings reached the English commanders, but were despised with the confident and supercilious imprudence which had already ruined more than one army in our western dominions. Suddenly, in the spring of 1763, the outburst came.

The principal place of the West, in these days, was Detroit, so called from standing on the strait between Lakes Huron and Erie. Being well situated for the fur trade, it was already a rising young town, inhabited as yet for the most part by Frenchmen, whose houses were scattered round the fort, recently handed over to an English garrison of little more than a hundred men under the command of Major Gladwyn. Three Indian tribes, the Ottawas, the Pottawatomies, and the Wyandots or Hurons, had villages close by. Here Pontiac was gathering an army of about a thousand warriors, without exciting any particular notice, as spring was the Indians' holiday, in which they were accustomed to repair to the neighbourhood of the settlements to sell their furs for blankets, guns, and whisky, and to give themselves up to laziness and dissipation. Their encampments at such seasons were like a fair.

But now there was stern work in hand beneath an appearance of carelessness and friendly trading. Councils were held, and stirring speeches made in a guttural jabber, at which

perhaps the English soldiers laughed if they heard them, but would scarcely have laughed if they had known their meaning. Under pretence of exhibiting a dance before the officers, Pontiac and forty of his men were admitted to the fort, where they went through their savage mummeries, but did not fail to use their eyes as well as their legs, observing closely the defences and the weakness of the garrison.

Then suspicious stories began to get about. The Indians had been borrowing files and saws from their French neighbours, with whom they were still on excellent terms. A Canadian woman, going among them to buy maple sugar and venison, found a number of them cutting down their guns to the length of a yard. What might this be for? Some of the French and half-breed inhabitants could have made a guess if they had cared to speak. Others did give a hint to the commander of the fort; and at last his eyes were clearly opened to the fact that something was very far wrong.

There are various accounts of how his enlightenment was brought about: let us take the most romantic. Major Gladwyn, they say, loved and was loved by a beautiful Indian girl. One day she came to the fort with some moccasins, embroidered with porcupine quills, which she had been making for him; but this did not seem to be all her business. She hung about, looking timid and anxious, as if she had something which she wished and yet was afraid to tell. Gladwyn noticed this, and pressed her to say what was the matter. At last her love for him overcame her fears of her own people, and making him promise not to betray her, she unbosomed herself of the secret that was weighing on her mind. It is also said that Pontiac later on learned how she had played him false, and punished her by a most severe beating administered with his own hands.

From whatever quarter the warning came, Gladwyn was

informed that next morning Pontiac would come to the fort with sixty men apparently unarmed, but having guns cut short so as to be hid under their blankets. They would ask to be admitted to a council, at which the chief would make a speech, and deliver a wampum belt in feigned token of peace, holding it upside down instead of in the usual way. At this preconcerted signal his companions would spring up and shoot the officers. Then, as soon as the firing was heard, the rest of the Indians hanging about the fort, as well as they could without exciting suspicion, were to bring out their concealed arms and rush in upon the garrison scattered and off their guard. Even the squaws, who might be more readily allowed to stroll through the narrow rows of houses within the enclosure, were appointed to take part in the work of death. Every Englishman was to be slaughtered without mercy.

On this information, the officers of the garrison prepared to meet the plot in a way which shows that they must not only have had great courage, but no little insight into the Indian character. The British regular troops in these wars seldom wanted for bravery, but they often put themselves at a disadvantage by not taking the trouble to consider the peculiarities of the enemy with whom they had to do. Yet policy would go as far as daring in this warfare: with the most successful Indian fighters they always went hand in hand.

It was a good watch that was kept at the fort all that night. From the Indian encampment could be heard by the sentries the tumult of the war-dance, with which the savages were lashing themselves up to a due point of fury for the work they had in hand. At dawn a large fleet of birch canoes was seen crossing the river; they were crowded with men lying down at the bottom, so as not to be observed by the soldiers. The open space about the fort was thronged by Indians in all their finery. The pretence for this assemblage was a great game of

ball, but it was a game of bullets that was meant to take place.

When Pontiac, however, and his band, marching in single file and closely wrapped in their gaudy blankets, arrived at the fort, they were taken aback to find the whole garrison under arms. Through lines of glittering bayonets they strode in, and the gates were shut behind them. The houses were closed; the traders and their men were armed; all was vigilance and resolution. It was plain that the intentions of the visitors were known. Their hearts failed them, and it was all they could do to preserve their stoical composure. This was the very way to impress such a people with the conscious strength of their enemies. They saw that the English were not afraid to let them in, and argued therefrom that they would not easily get out.

But as they might not turn back, it was necessary to play out the farce as best they could. According to their request, they were received in council by the officers; but it was only with some reluctance that the betrayers, who found themselves acting the part of betrayed, would consent to sit down. Pontiac's speech went off lamely. He hurried over his lying phrases about smoking the calumet of peace and brightening the chain of friendship. He handled the deceitful wampum belt, but when he saw that his victims had their pistols ready, and heard the roll of the drums and the rattle of arms round the council house, he durst not give the preconcerted signal. Then Major Gladwyn, who had coolly remained seated while keeping a keen watch on the movements of the Indians, addressed them in his turn. He sternly and coldly dismissed them, warning them to take care what they were about, and showing, though he did not allude to it, that he knew and despised their treachery. The would-be slaughterers sneaked away, glad to find themselves safely outside the gates.

If Gladwyn had known how wide and deep spread was this conspiracy, he would scarcely have let off these leaders of it so cheaply. He was soon to learn his mistake. Next day they threw off the mask and rose against the English with circumstances that to this generation may well recall the horrors of the East Indian mutiny. Like the residence of Lucknow, the fort, weak and ill garrisoned, held bravely out against an army of cruel savages, the French inhabitants of the surrounding town standing neutral. The exciting incidents of the siege make too long a story to be related here; they are admirably described in Parkman's *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*, one of the most valuable as well as the most interesting books that has ever been written on Indian affairs.

All the summer that siege lasted. The Indians harassed the garrison day and night, cut off its supplies and reinforcements, and, when repeated attacks had failed, blockaded it with a patience and persistency that could scarcely have been expected of them. But as winter drew on, disappointed of aid from the French, and unable to continue acting in concert, the mob of warriors melted away from the camp like a snowball. At last Pontiac himself gave up the attempt, and Detroit was safe, while tardy but crushing victories on other parts of the frontier taught the red men to think well before rousing the British power.

The smaller western garrisons were not so fortunate. Before they suspected the danger, it was upon them, and one by one they fell into the hands of the enemy. Some were betrayed. A band of Indian visitors, entering the gates and mixing with the English soldiers, rewarded the confidence with which they were received by falling upon their hosts and massacring them almost before they could strike a blow; or they would be tempted outside, and murdered or made prisoners. Others, occupied by a dozen or twenty men, made a desperate resist-

ance. At one, the garrison, after bravely defending themselves for two days and nights, and having their blockhouse set on fire over them again and again, scorched, half stifled, and worn out, were obliged to surrender for want of water. A second was also set on fire; but while the assailants were screeching outside, every moment expecting to see their victims driven forth by the flames to the mercy of their tomahawks, the Englishmen managed to cut their way out at the back, and escaped into the woods unseen in the darkness and the tumult. At another, not one man escaped to tell the fate of his comrades. The death, and the agonies worse than death, of such men were the cost of our colonial empire in those dark forests.

The most signal of these misfortunes is an oft-told tale, that will bear telling once more:—In the heart of that mighty chain of lakes, each of which could swallow up a whole country of Europe, lies the beautiful island Michillimackinac, or Mackinaw, as it is now called by an abbreviation of the Indian name for a tortoise, from a resemblance to the shape of which the island got its name. It is a far-famed spot, rich in tender and solemn associations for both white man and red. Opposite, on the mainland, may still be traced the lines of a fort which was originally built by the French as a station for their enterprising fur traders and no less daring missionaries. When the war of Pontiac broke out, the white flag of France had given place to St. George's Cross on this remote stronghold. The inhabitants were still chiefly Canadians of doubtful loyalty to their new rulers, but English traders were beginning to appear among them. Captain Etherington was the commander of a small garrison, who were glad of any little incident to break the monotony of their lives, and fancied themselves to be on the most secure terms with the neigh-

bouring tribes of the Chippeways and Ottawas. But the war belt had reached these tribes; they heard how Detroit had been attacked, and was likely to fall into the hands of their kinsmen. They did not immediately declare that they were going to take up the hatchet; that would not have been Indian nature. Coming and going at the fort as usual, they invited the English to be spectators of one of the great ball plays which were so frequent among them.

The game of *baggataway*, which under its modern form of *La Crosse* is highly popular in Canada, and of late years has even been introduced into Europe, was such a favourite among most of the Indian tribes as to be considered by them, next to war and hunting, part of the business of life. It was indeed a most exciting and athletic exercise, with some of the features of our chief games, but more like hockey than any other. The bats were sticks carved at one end into a small loop, across which were fastened thongs of hide as in a tennis bat. The balls were made of a knot of wood, a lump of clay, or a handful of hair pressed close and sewn into a piece of deerskin so as to form a ball about the size of that used in the Scotch game of golf. There were goals and bounds, as in football, and scorers and umpires, as in cricket. When we come to the players, their only resemblance to our flannelled youth was in gorgeousness of colour; each man played almost naked, but he decorated himself with a coat of paint as brilliant and fantastic as any of our club uniforms, and often added the ornament of a beast's or bird's tail sticking out behind him, which, one would think, must have been rather in the way in a close scrimmage. The game could be played on a scale that would astonish our 'elevens' and 'fifteens.' There were often hundreds engaged on each side, and a field of a thousand players would keep the match up by relays for three or four days together.

These matches were sometimes fixed long before, and prepared for with great solemnity. The leaders would 'pick sides' by alternate choice; or more likely one tribe would formally challenge another. Then each of the nations looked forward to the coming event with as much interest and excitement as is caused among us by the Oxford and Cambridge boat race. In another respect these contests rather resembled our Derby. The Indians dearly loved gambling, and it was usual to play for a stake, composed of all the most valuable articles which the rivals could scrape together to lay on their prowess.

The night before the match, the two tribes would be encamped near the scene of action, busily and noisily engaged in preparations for the great work of the morrow. Our boys, in such circumstances, find a good night's rest the best guarantee for active limbs and sharp eyes; the Indians thought otherwise. They were in the habit of sitting up late, and invigorating themselves by drumming, dancing, and yelling, while the pow-wows shrieked out their ludicrous incantations for the success of their party, and the old men, gravely squatted round the fires, passed the pipe from hand to hand, inspired the 'team' who were to support the honour of the tribe by relating their past triumphs, and perhaps mumbled to each other that games, and players, and the world in general had sadly fallen off since the days when they were young.

Every Indian who wished to keep his scalp on his shoulders was bound to be always in good condition; but for such an occasion as this, the young warriors, in addition to fasting and vigil, were sometimes required to submit to a severe discipline that would rather stagger most of our aspirants for distinction on the cricket or football field. Captain Basil Hall describes a process of 'training' of which he was witness among the Creek Indians, and which we may agree with him in thinking would be more likely to lay one of us up for a week than to

give him strength for doing and enduring. This is what the travellers saw :—

‘In the middle of the sandy floor a fire was burning, round which were assembled some of the most athletic young men of the village, who had been previously selected by the elders as performers in the next day’s sport.

‘These youths were not long in stripping off all their clothes except a slight wrapper round the middle. I could see at once that something remarkable was about to take place, but what it was I could not conjecture. Their first operation was to tie cords tightly round one another’s arms and thighs, so as effectually to check the course of the blood in the veins. As soon as this was done, they splashed themselves over with water from head to foot, and then very deliberately allowed their limbs to be scratched or rather scarified by some old Indians who attended for that purpose with instruments, the name of which I forget. Some of these were made of common needles stuck in a piece of wood, but those most in fashion were formed out of the teeth of the fish called Gar. I purchased one of them, which is now in my possession ; it consists of two rows, one of fifteen, the other of fourteen sharp teeth, tied firmly, by means of a grass fibre, to the core of the maize, or to what is called in America a corn cob.

‘Each of the young Indians who was to be operated upon placed himself in a sloping position against one of the wooden pillars which supported the roof, clasping it with his hands. The experienced performers then drew the instrument I have just described, apparently as hard as he could press it, along the arms and legs of these resolute fellows, over a space of about nine inches in length, so that each of the teeth cut into the skin, or at all events made a very decided mark or furrow along the surface. The sharp sound of these scrapings was very disagreeable to the ear.

'Five separate scratchings were made on each man's leg below the knee, five on each thigh, and five on each arm—in all, thirty sets of cuts. As the instrument contained about thirty teeth, each Indian must in every case have had several hundred lines drawn on his skin. The blood flowed profusely as long as the bandages were kept tight. This, indeed, seemed to be one of their principal objects, as the Indians endeavoured to assist the bleeding by throwing their arms and legs about, holding them over and sometimes placing them almost in the fire for a second or two. It was altogether a hideous and frightful scene. For my own part, I scarcely knew how to feel when I found myself amongst some dozens of naked savages, streaming with blood from top to toe, skipping and yelling round a fire, or talking at the top of their voices in a language of which I knew nothing, or laughing as merrily as if it were the best fun in the world to be cut to pieces. Not one of these lads uttered the slightest complaint during the operation, but when I watched their countenances closely, I observed that only two or three bore the discipline without shrinking or twisting their faces a little.

'I was told that these scarifications and bleedings render the men more limber and active, and bring them into proper condition to undergo the exertion of the ball play on the following morning.'

A game which could command such preparations must have been indeed a serious matter. Now let us return to Fort Michillimackinac, where something more than mere pastime was in view, and seventy poor fellows were all unconsciously sleeping their last sleep on earth.

Early in the forenoon the goals were set up, between one or two hundred yards apart, on an open space of turf. Round about were grouped the spectators, watching the game with an eagerness which frequently broke into shouts of laughter and

applause. At a point answering to what we should call the scorer's tent, sat a band of old men with little sticks to mark the game. Before them the stakes lay in a heap—arms, ornaments, blankets, beads, furs, and all the articles of Indian wealth. The players drew up facing each other, scattered in various posts, some playing forward, some keeping the goals, and so on. Half way between them the ball was placed, perhaps by a graceful Indian girl in her gala dress of paint and feathers. All hearts beating with excitement, the leaders advanced from either side, and when the signal was given, made an effort to get the first hit at the ball. Away it went flying in the air, then with a mighty yell the whole field burst into motion.

Every football player can well imagine the melee which now ensued; struggling, scuffling, shouting, shinning, pushing, tumbling, tripping, running, panting; now here, now there, rolled the thick of the contest, and victory again and again wavered from one side to the other. Now a hundred copper-coloured forms, packed in a dense crowd of arms and legs, are for several minutes kicking and hitting each other in default of the ball which they can't even get a sight of. Down go a dozen in a heap, and the rest fall helplessly over them, pushed on by the eager outsiders. Then the crowd bursts open, the ball steals forth like a fox from its cover; one sharp-eyed fellow bounds after it with a scream of triumph. Another lucky man has caught it in the hollow of the bat, and is 'running with the ball,' the opponents rushing to throw him down or snatch it from him. As in football, it must not be touched by the hand, nor by the foot either for that matter. There is a lull in the game; the ball has gone out of bounds, and must be thrown back between the players waiting in two rows. At last one side makes a decisive charge. By force, cunning, and good luck, they drive the ball through all the

ranks of their opponents, and send it spinning over the goal amid the roars of their enthusiastic admirers. This scores one to them, and the game begins afresh, having been fixed for twenty, thirty, or whatever it may be. The players seem as if they could never have enough of it.

In describing a game of ball at which he was present, Catlin tells us that the attitudes and mishaps of the players were often so ludicrous that he could scarcely sit on his horse for laughter. But before long the excitable Indians were sure to work themselves up into a state of fury. Bruises, bloody noses, even broken bones were common incidents. It was held manly to take all the roughs and tumbles of the game in good humour, yet sometimes the rivals got to fighting in real earnest; then their kinsmen on either side would be sure to strike in, and what began as a game would end as a battle. This was so possible a result that it was the standing rule of these meetings that all deadly weapons should be put away before the play commenced; so, if things did come to a quarrel, they would not have the means of doing one another much harm.

Such was the stirring scene which was going on before the palisades of Fort Michillimackinac on the morning of the 4th June 1763. It was the king's birthday, and the soldiers were making a holiday of it. Some of them, without their arms, were lounging or lying on the grass, mixed with the rest of the white inhabitants, smoking their pipes as they watched with lazy amusement the turns of the game and made bets on one side or other. Others were strolling about the barracks in their shirt sleeves, thinking no doubt of the good dinner which would be cooking in honour of the occasion, or perhaps dreaming of the good beef and beer which they had left behind in Old England. It was a hot idle day; the gates were wide open; the sentries stood wearying to be relieved from their

drowsy post. Danger was the last thought in the mind of the commander, who was outside acting as patron of the sports, and fancying most likely that his condescension must be winning the minds of the simple red men.

All at once the commotion is doubled. High and far over the heads of the crowd flies the ball, and falls, as if by chance, close to the gate of the fort. The players, hundreds strong, make a dash after it, and the spectators are closing in behind. Naturally, no ceremony can be expected at such a moment; nobody who wishes not to be trampled to the ground will remain in the track of the excited mob, each furious to outstrip the others and catch up the ball. The only way of withstanding such a rush is to clasp a tree with both legs and arms, and hold on desperately till the tide of the contest has swept by; so the soldiers, laughing good-naturedly, prepare to get out of the way.

But what is this? It is no more the eager shout of harmless strife, but the fatal war-whoop which is filling the air. The naked players fling away their bats, and in their hands gleam the knives and tomahawks which till now have been concealed beneath the blankets of their squaws. Is this part of the sport? Good heavens! they are cutting down the unarmed Englishmen! In a moment the struggle is changed from jest to grimmiest earnest.

To fight or fly was equally impossible. Almost before they could understand what had happened, the soldiers were overpowered. A few were seized and bound; most were murdered on the spot, while their French neighbours looked on with scared faces; to them no injury was offered. Some of them had a pretty good notion of how this game was to end, but here was a sight for the women and children who had come out to see an amusing spectacle!

The Indians rushed like a torrent into the fort, killing every

Englishman they met. Scarcely a shot was fired. Those who happened to be within doors heard the hideous din, ran to the windows, and saw their countrymen being scalped, held between the knees of the bloodthirsty red men. These pale and horrified spectators seized their arms, but no drum called them to rally for defence. Hurrying into the houses of the Frenchmen, to secret holes and corners, they endeavoured to conceal themselves, in vain stopping their ears against the cries of slaughter, and trembling at every sound which seemed the footfall of an Indian seeking their blood.

A few were thus saved by the compassion of the French inhabitants, and some had been spared by the Indians, even in the first fury of the massacre, perhaps with the intention of torturing them at leisure. So in the evening, about twenty persons, the sole survivors of nearly a hundred, found themselves prisoners, hardly sure of their lives from hour to hour, while their savage conquerors filled the fort with the tumult of a mad debauch upon the stores of liquor which they had thus become masters of.

But the plunder and the glory, such as it was, proved to be all the good that the Indians got out of their cunning stratagem. Nothing was done to follow up this successful stroke. The different tribes soon began to quarrel with each other about the disposal of the prisoners, who in the end were let free, after spending an anxious time in captivity, and learning what it was to feel their scalps safe on their heads. Thus, as so often happened, the cruel butchery of Michillimackinac only availed to make the white men forget mercy and justice when their turn came.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRUE STORY OF WYOMING.



MOST of us who may know almost nothing else of American history, have at least, perhaps, heard of the valley of Wyoming, and the scenes which took place there in the revolutionary war. This it owes to Campbell's sentimental poem, 'Gertrude of Wyoming,' which presents such a touching picture of rural innocence disturbed by the terrors of war. But the poet was no better informed than his readers when he wrote :—

'Delightful Wyoming! beneath thy skies
The happy shepherd swains had nought to do
But feed their flocks on green declivities,
Or skim perchance thy lake with light canoe.
From morn till evening's sweeter pastime grew
With timbrel, when beneath the forests brown
The lovely maidens would the dance renew,
And aye those sunny mountains half way down
Would echo flagelet from some romantic town.

The Men of the Backwoods.

'Then, when of Indian hills the daylight takes
His leave, how might you the flamingo see
Disporting like a meteor on the lakes,
And playful squirrel on his nut-grown tree !
And every sound of life was full of glee,
From merry mock-bird's song or hum of men ;
While hearkening, fearing naught their revelry,
The wild deer arched his neck from glades, and then
Unhunted, sought his woods and wilderness again.

'And scarce had Wyoming of war or crime
Heard '—

It would have been nearer the truth to say that this happy valley had scarcely heard of anything else since first the white man set his foot in it. The romantic swains to whom the poet's imagination attributed such idyllic employments, seemed rather to have nothing else to do but to quarrel, abuse, slander, and shoot each other. No spot could in fact be more unlike Paradise than Wyoming. The first settlers fell to fighting among themselves, and a vulgar civil war raged in the valley for years, not ceasing wholly even while the country was at war with England, and breaking out again for a time when that great struggle was ended. The place was indeed by nature an oasis of peace and beauty, but the evil passions of men made it a home for hatred and slaughter.

Wyoming is a narrow valley, about twenty miles long, in its natural state a maze of ravines, rocks, streams, woods, and rich meadows bordering the Susquehanna, all enclosed in fairy-like seclusion from the world without by two ranges of low hills. In the early days of American colonization, when very little was known about the geography of the country, this district had been granted twice over to two proprietary bodies, which, in the middle of last century, were represented by the States of Pennsylvania and Connecticut. At this time the white men found out its attractions, and both these states

claimed the right of settling it. To make surer, each bought the land from the Indians who claimed it, and the red man took the money of both parties and left them to fight out all disputes with each other. So they did, at first in the courts of law; but the law had little power in the wilderness, and soon armed men from either side arrived to take possession of the ground.

Now began between the Yankees and the 'Pennamites' a fierce though petty war that long destroyed the peace of the valley, and was a complete satire on the bloody art as carried on by greater communities. Among these few hundred husbandmen there were armies, fortifications, sieges, surprises, ambuscades on a small scale, and even one piece of artillery is mentioned—a four-pounder. Many a gallant and useful life was lost in this miserable contest, and the whole valley was desecrated by blood shed by brothers grudging each other's hopes of prosperity, while all around an unbroken wilderness was waiting for the plough and the axe. Three times the Yankees had been driven out and obliged to go back to Connecticut; but each time they had indomitably returned in fresh force, and at last, after seven years, were in turn getting the best of it, when the revolt of the colonies against England brought the strife to a temporary end. But, as has been already said, it broke out again at intervals, even while the great war was still in progress. Not for ten years yet was it finally appeased by a compromise. And then, when the inhabitants had come, unarmed, to a great open-air public meeting, at which this peaceable arrangement was to be discussed and agreed upon, party feeling ran so high that at one stage in the proceedings the disputants on both sides rushed into the wood to cut cudgels, and began belabouring each other in the style of argument to which they had been so unhappily accustomed. Clearly it was not alone to the British and the Indians that Wyoming owed its troubles.

From Wyoming, two companies of soldiers were sent to Washington's army. But when the valley had thus been despoiled of the flower of its able-bodied men, they were found likely to be wanted for its own defence. The conduct of the neighbouring Indians had for some time been suspicious and unfriendly; now they had openly joined the British, and were waging a disastrous border warfare. The isolated position of the settlement exposed it to attack; it was known that some 'Tories' who had property in the valley, would of course desire to bring in the British; the other settlers grew alarmed, and sent to the Government to ask for protection. But no troops could be spared at that juncture, though in the army there were husbands and brothers, fathers and sons from Wyoming, who were eager to return when they heard of the peril in which their homes and families lay. Some of the officers did throw up their commissions, and went home to find their neighbours gathered into log forts, the old men rubbing up their arms, the women making powder, and the very boys forming themselves into a company and learning to fight the foe whose attacks were to be dreaded day by day.

In the sweetest season of the year, about midsummer 1778, came the first drops of the threatened storm. Several men working in the fields were killed or captured. Soon it was known throughout the valley that a British force had entered the head of it; and most of the people hastened to gather at Forty Fort, one of the largest and strongest of their defences. It was no false alarm. Colonel John Butler, with a mixed force of Tories and Iroquois Indians, variously stated at from five hundred to a thousand men, was upon them. On the other hand, about three hundred combatants were all that could be mustered at the fort, and of these many were too old or too young to do much service. They chose as their commander one of the officers who had just arrived from the

American army, and who, by a strange coincidence, bore the same surname as his opponent—Colonel Zebulon Butler. In his official report, he contradicts the patriotic notion that all the men of Wyoming prepared themselves for the forthcoming battle. Too many, he complains, stayed in the various forts on the excuse of protecting their families. It must, however, be remembered that part of the inhabitants were Quakers, who might refuse to fight even in their own defence.

There were three or four days of suspense. The British commander sent to Forty Fort, proposing terms of surrender, which were refused. Colonel Zebulon Butler and some of the older men, who knew what war was, proposed delay and standing on the defensive, hoping for the arrival of a reinforcement that was indeed on its way, and would have come up in a day or two. But there were hot-headed spirits who insisted on giving battle at once, and taunted their old leader with the accusation of cowardice. Against his better judgment, he gave way, saying, 'I tell you we go into great danger, but I can go as far as any of you.' It was the afternoon of 3d July when the little army left the fort, and an hour's march brought them in presence of the enemy. Then less than an hour was enough to give the boastful and inexperienced recruits bitter reason to repent of their foolhardiness.

The battle was begun with spirit; and at first the Americans, though far inferior in numbers, seemed to be getting the best of it. But soon a retrograde movement took place in their left wing, said to be caused by an unfortunate mistake of the militia officer commanding it, who gave the wrong word of command. 'The Indians,' says Miner in his history of Wyoming, 'had thrown into the swamp a large force, which now completely outflanked our left. It was impossible it should be otherwise; that wing was thrown into confusion. Colonel Denison gave orders that the company of Whittlesey

should wheel back, so as to form an angle with the main line, and thus present his front instead of flank to the enemy. The difficulty of performing evolutions by the bravest militia on the field under a hot fire is well known. On the attempt, the savages rushed in with horrid yells. Some had mistaken the order to fall back as one to "retreat;" and that word, that fatal word, ran along the line. Utter confusion now prevailed on the left. Seeing the disorder, and his own men beginning to give way, Colonel Z. Butler threw himself between the fires of the opposing ranks, and rode up and down the line in the most reckless exposure. "Don't leave me, my children, and the victory is ours!" But it was too late.'

Raw troops are more easily struck with a panic than rallied when a flight has once set in. Most of the chief officers had already fallen, and Butler tried in vain to keep the men to their posts. On both left and right wings the retreat became a rout. The Americans fled in hopeless confusion, intent, for the moment, only on saving themselves from the painted Indians, bounding and whooping in fierce pursuit, shooting down the fugitives, scalping the wounded, and giving no quarter save to those whom they reserved for a more cruel death.

That most of the few prisoners were butchered in cold blood after the battle, and some with horrible tortures, appears beyond doubt, though there is some question as to the number of the victims. There are well-established stories of peculiar atrocities, as the case of a poor boy of fifteen, who, though ordered by his father to go home, had persisted in following him to the fight, and being taken, was thrown down upon four bayonets fixed in the ground, and burned by a fire of pine knots kindled beneath his writhing body. Two men who escaped from the very jaws of slaughter, described a fearful scene which was enacted on the night after the battle. Sixteen prisoners were brought to a rock, still called 'Bloody

Rock,' to be sacrificed to the spirit of a son recently lost by an old half-breed woman who had great influence among the Indians, and was known among the white men as Queen Esther. The victims were held down upon the rock by two Indians, and, one by one, the furious chieftainess dashed out their brains with a club. None are known to have been spared, except those two, who suddenly broke away and escaped in the confusion. In all, it is supposed that about two hundred men were killed in or after the fight.

Many narrow escapes are still held in memory by the descendants of those who fought that day. A young man named Hollenback was chased by three or four Indians for more than a mile and a half. He tried to carry off a wounded comrade, whom, however, he was soon obliged to abandon to be scalped by the savages. He made for the river, and, as he ran, he tore off all his clothes except his hat, into which, like a 'cute American, he put most of his money, consisting of paper bills, and held a piece of gold between his teeth. Arrived at the bank, he plunged into the water, at the edge of which several hapless fugitives, unable to swim, were being tomahawked. Hollenback dived, and swam beneath the surface as long as he could hold his breath, while the Indians kept firing on him from the bank as often as he showed his head; then, like a loon, he would dive again at the flash of the gun. He felt one ball touch him, making him open his mouth and drop his piece of gold. At last he gained the farther shore, naked, and, as he supposed, wounded, but he could not find any wound; the bullet had only grazed his skin. He plunged into the woods, and soon fell in with one of his comrades, who was in a better plight than himself, having retained his shirt and breeches. This man gave Hollenback the shirt, and thus scantily clothed, they scrambled over hills, through swamps and thickets, and reached home by a circuitous route.

In the heat of victory, the Tories seem to have been scarcely less furious than their savage allies. One tale is told in the valley which, for the sake of human nature, we would rather call a legend. A panting fugitive had taken refuge in an island on the river, and was hiding among the bushes, when he was discovered by his own brother, who was fighting on the side of the British. The unfortunate man fell on his knees and begged for his life, promising to serve his brother as a slave all the rest of his days. 'All this is mighty good,' replied the brutal fellow with an oath; 'but you are a rebel,' and he shot his brother dead, a deed that shocked even the Indians. This unnatural brother afterwards settled in Canada, not daring to return to his old home where his wickedness was known. The legend declares him henceforth marked out as the prey of wolves. Twice they chased him, and twice he was rescued by Indians, who began to think that this was no mere accident, but that the Great Spirit was angry with the man, and that the cruellest of deaths was his inevitable fate. A third time the wolves scented the fratricidal blood, and this time there was no help—the wretch was torn in pieces and devoured by the fierce beasts with whom his crime had made him kindred.

What, meantime, must have been the anxiety of those who remained in the fort? Never would they forget that calm summer evening when, after seeing their protectors disappear among the woods, they strained their ears to catch the first shot of the battle, then stood eagerly listening with exclamations of hope and fear, till they fancied that the sound of firing was advancing up the valley. Alas! it was no fancy: their friends were being driven back, and the scattered shots, that came nearer and nearer, told no longer of a combat but of a flight. Soon the mounted officers dashed up on their reeking horses, the very sight of which announced that the

day had gone against them. Then towards nightfall the other fugitives came dropping in, exhausted and dispirited, and were received by their families as men from the grave. 'But oh! how many husbands and sons came not!'¹

Fear and confusion now took possession of all. That same night a party of militia came up to succour the fort, but there seems to have been no question of resistance. It was *sauf* *qui peut*. Next morning the American soldiers and many of the settlers fled in haste from the valley. Some perished by the way from fatigue and hunger, and a thick pine wood through which their path lay has been named 'The Shades of Death.' Most of them, however, got safely to the nearest settlements, where, having lost their all, they had still to undergo great sufferings from want.

On the day after the battle, the people who stayed in the fort surrendered it upon terms of capitulation by which the British leader undertook to protect their lives and property. The conquerors marched in, and for the first day the officers were able to keep the Indians in order. But before long the British Colonel Butler either could not or would not restrain his undisciplined auxiliaries, who, after their custom, began to plunder and insult the people, though they did not proceed to the worst excesses of Indian warfare. They strolled about the cabins with drunken impudence, ransacking every place, taking what they pleased and stripping from the backs of the prisoners any article of clothing that struck their savage fancy. A store of provisions was only preserved from their clutches by a lucky device, without which the poor inhabitants might have been left starving. This store was concealed in a cellar which the Indians were about to explore, when some ready-witted person called out with feigned anxiety, 'Small-pox! small-pox!' at which the warriors made off in the utmost terror.

¹ Dr. Peck's *Wyoming*.

When after a few days they went away, they were loaded with a mixture of spoils both horrible and ludicrous. The squaws, for whom this was a time of high holiday, paraded the scalps of their friends and their own best clothes before the unwilling entertainers who were so glad to see the backs of such visitors. A brave might be seen howling and staggering in the ample broadcloth of a Quaker. 'They took our feather beds,' says one of the sufferers, 'and, ripping open the ticks, flung out the feathers and crammed in their plunder, consisting mostly of fine clothing, and throwing them over their horses, went off. A squaw came riding up with ribbons stringing from her head over her horse's tail. Some of the squaws would have on two or three bonnets, generally back side before. One rode off outside mother's side-saddle, that, too, wrong end foremost, and mother's scarlet cloak hanging before her, being tied at the back of her neck. We could not help laughing at the ridiculous figure she cut, in spite of the deep trouble which then almost overwhelmed us.'

The same witness testifies that some of the Indians were friendly enough. 'They painted us, and tied white bands around our heads, as they said, that we might be known as prisoners of war, and not be in danger of being killed by strange Indians.' On the whole, the people at the fort seem not to have had much to complain of, beyond the fortune of war. But when Butler and his force retired from the valley, they wantonly burned the deserted houses and did all the damage they could—injuries which were amply retaliated in an invasion of the Indian country carried out by the American army some time later.¹

¹ 'In the Indian country, hundreds of fields, teeming with corn, beans, and other vegetables, were laid waste with rigid severity. Every house, hut, and wigwam was consumed. Cultivated in rude Indian fashion for centuries, orchards abounded, and near a town between the Seneca and Cayuga lakes,

For a fortnight a number of the settlers still remained, hoping to receive speedy assistance. But when they seemed abandoned by their own friends, and when a rumour was spread that the Tories and Indians were about to return, this time to kill all they found, those who had clung to their homes lost heart, and one party after another fled, leaving the fair valley for months a desolate solitude.

It was not till autumn that Colonel Zebulon Butler came back with an armed force, and buried the dead bodies that had been lying, a ghastly sight, beneath sun and storm on the battle-field. More than fifty years afterwards, when Wyoming had at last found peace and prosperity, the great grave in which these bones had been laid was discovered, and is now marked as an honoured spot, on which a granite monument tells how these soldiers fell and the pious gratitude of their descendants.

Such are the simple facts of what has been called the Massacre of Wyoming—facts which have suffered even more than usual at the hands of popular prejudice. We can well understand how the poor people who stole back to their ruined homes, and laid the disfigured corpses of their friends in that hasty grave, should have hated the enemies who brought this ruin upon them, and painted the British partisans in the darkest colours. But it is not excusable that grave

there were fifteen hundred peach trees bending under ripe and ripening fruit : all were cut down. The besom of destruction swept, if with regret and pity, still with firm hand, through all their fair fields and fertile plains. Deeply were they made to drink of the bitter chalice they had so often forced remorselessly to the lips of the frontier settlers within their reach. Some idea of the extent of country inhabited by the Indians, the number of their towns, and the great quantity of produce to be destroyed, may be formed when it is stated that an army of four thousand men were employed without a day's (except indispensable) remission, from the 29th of August until the 28th of September, in accomplishing the work of destruction.'—Hon. C. Miner's *History of Wyoming*.

historians should have dipped their pens in this gall, and distorted the sufficiently sad incidents of the case by groundless exaggerations. We are told, for instance, that the fort was attacked and defended with desperate courage; that the assailants sent in two hundred bloody scalps to terrify the garrison; that, when terms were demanded, the only answer was—the *hatchet!* that most of the defenders were killed or disabled; and that the rest, women and children and all, were shut up and burned alive in their houses. All this is pure fiction, as is confessed by later American writers, who set the truth above national grudges. In their narratives, the worst features of the affair come down to the refusing of quarter on the field, and the torture of prisoners by the Indians after the battle.

Far be it from us to defend such atrocities, or to depreciate the spirit with which the Americans strove for their just liberties. But let us calmly look at the circumstances of the case, and consider the height to which feeling ran on both sides. The people of Wyoming, so far from being an unusually inoffensive community, plainly contained many unruly and cantankerous spirits, who have been raised to the rank of heroes mainly by their misfortunes. The 'Fories,' of whom they still speak so bitterly, had been themselves driven from their homes, and often treated with severity and ignominy by the rebels, for no other crime than standing by what was, in their eyes, the only legitimate Government. The British soldiers who may have been concerned—though it does not appear clear that Colonel John Butler had any regular soldiers under his orders—would only be doing their duty in reducing a rebellious settlement. We do not know that they did not try to make the Indians observe the rules of civilised warfare; and we do know that, in such border fighting, officers with the best intentions were not always

able to keep their ferocious allies within bounds. It may have been wrong to employ Indian warriors at all, but Indians had been so employed hitherto by all contending parties on the American continent, and in this instance they seem to have been under more restraint than usual ; certainly, it must be confessed with shame that in the same war there were passages in which their conduct was far more heinous. As for 'the monster Brant,' whom Campbell has held up for our execration as their leader, not only was this celebrated chief far from being inhuman, compared with the rest of his countrymen, but there is little or no reason to believe that he took any part in the affair of Wyoming. His presence is vouched for only by a vague tradition, as trustworthy as the evidence of the siege and the burning of women and children.

Campbell's poem, then, is very much a work of the imagination. But had he known the truth, he might have found as pathetic a theme in more than one of the real romances of Wyoming at that stirring time. For instance, there is the story of Frances Slocum, which has been treated in verse by Mrs. Sigourney, but which loses none of its interest in simple prose :—

For some time after the battle of Wyoming, the hostile Indians continued to prowl about the valley ; and though some of the settlers ventured to return, it was only at the risk of their lives that they could reap their crops. Among these was a Quaker named Slocum, who, not having taken any part in the fighting, hoped that the enemy would leave him alone.

One winter day the men of the family were out at work. There remained at home Mrs. Slocum and her children—Ebenezer, a lame boy thirteen years old ; Mary, nine years old ; Frances, a child of five ; and Joseph, a little fellow of two

and a half; also a negro girl and two lads of the name of Kingsley, whose father had been captured by the Indians, and who were kindly entertained by the worthy Quakers.

Most of the family were in the house; the two Kingsleys were grinding a knife before the door, when suddenly a shot roused them in their peaceful occupations, and in an instant they knew that the dreaded misfortune had come upon them. The elder Kingsley fell dead; three savages rushed up and scalped him with the knife he had just been sharpening. The other boy ran into the house, and, with little Frances, hid himself beneath the stairs. Mary, the nine-years-old daughter, showed wonderful presence of mind; she caught up her baby brother and ran with him to the fort which was close by, while the Indians shouted after her and roared with laughter, but made no serious attempt at pursuit. They indeed showed a singular degree of good nature in their cruel work, for when they now laid hold of Ebenezer, and his poor mother, forgetting her own danger, ran out from her concealment, crying, 'The child is lame; he can do thee no good!' they let him go, to her unutterable relief, for she knew that the boy would not be able to keep up with them on their march, and that the tomahawk was certain to be his fate. Yet her agony was roused afresh when the robbers, making a dash into the house, found Frances' hiding-place, and dragged her out along with young Kingsley. This time Mrs. Slocum begged in vain for mercy. Without delay, for they knew that the alarm would soon be given at the fort, the Indians made off, forcing Frances and the boy away with them. The miserable woman saw her darling disappear in the arms of a savage, with one little hand pushing her long fair hair from her face, and stretching the other towards her mother as she piteously cried to her for help. That last look was branded into the mother's mind for life; she never saw her fair-haired girl again. Nor could she



FRANCES SLOCUM TAKEN BY THE INDIANS.

ever forget that little Frances had been barefooted when she was carried away. For many years afterwards, thinking of the rough roads and frozen snow which the child would have to travel, she would burst into tears, and exclaim, '*Oh! if she only had her shoes.*'

The negro girl is also stated to have been taken at the same time, but of her and of the younger boy Kingsley nothing further is heard. This was not the last blow the Indians inflicted upon the family. Little more than a month had passed, and their sorrow was scarcely deadened, when the father and the old grandfather were killed, and the eldest son wounded, while they were working in the fields. Thus was human life cut down like grass among the first tillers of that virgin soil.

Mrs. Slocum and her children were now left to fight their own way through the world, but by and by came quieter times, and the family prospered as they deserved. When the sons grew up, they made it a duty to seek for their lost sister. They took several long journeys among the Indians; they commissioned Indian agents and traders to make inquiries; they offered a reward of five hundred dollars for any news of Frances; they several times went to see white persons recovered from the hands of the Indians, but nowhere could they either find or hear of her whom they sought. Years went by, and her brothers thought that Frances must be dead. But the bereaved mother no more ceased to hope than to forget the shrieks of her child dying away in the distance, and to see the little face covered with tears as she struggled in the cruel savage's arms.

Once a white woman came with the story that she had been taken prisoner on the Susquehanna while very young, and could not remember her parents' name. Might she not be the lost one? No! the mother saw at a glance that this was not

her child ; but she bid the stranger welcome, and kept her in the house as long as she liked to stay, reflecting that perhaps some person would be as kind to her dear Frances.

In 1807, nearly thirty years after the battle, Mrs. Slocum died, charging her sons not to give up the search. And so late as 1826, one of them travelled a long way to see a white woman whom he had heard of among the Indians. It was only another disappointment. The fate of the fair-haired girl, who now, if alive, must be an old woman, seemed buried in a silence as deep as the forests into which her captors had carried her.

Time went on. In 1835, Colonel Ewing, one of the agents of the Government for dealing with the Indians, was travelling near the Wabash river in the State of Indiana. He passed a night at a Miami village, and was hospitably entertained by an old woman, the widow of a chief, who seemed to be greatly respected by the rest of the tribe, and lived in what, among the Indians, was wealth and comfort. The visitor was struck by the colour of her hair and skin, and knowing the language well, talked to her with the view of learning her history. After a little she told him that she was white by birth, and could remember being stolen away from her parents, who lived somewhere near the Susquehanna river. Her father's name, she said, was Slocum : he was a Quaker, and wore a broad-brimmed hat. Her own Christian name she had forgotten, as also every word of her native tongue. For more than seventy years, as she believed, she had been living, first among the Delawares who carried her off, and now among the Miamis. The Indians had treated her with kindness, and she had long had a positive fear of being known by any of her white relations, lest they should force her away from a life that had become her second nature. But now, as her husband was dead, and she could not expect to survive him long, she was

not unwilling to have inquiries made after her own kin, though she thought all her brothers and sisters must be dead.

The substance of this communication Colonel Ewing put down in writing, and lost no time in sending it to the postmaster of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, begging him to make inquiries in the neighbourhood for the descendants of Mr. Slocum, and to publish the facts in the local papers. The letter duly arrived; but the postmaster was either not so kind-hearted as the colonel, or thought the affair nothing but a hoax. Without taking any steps to publish it, he threw the letter away, and for two years it lay among a heap of old papers. At the end of that time, the postmaster happened to die, and his wife, searching among his papers, found this neglected epistle. Her woman's wit saw at once how it might bring comfort to some mourning heart even yet, when so many years had passed away. So it came to be published in a newspaper, a copy of which fell into the hands of Mr. Joseph Slocum, once the little helpless boy whom his sister Mary snatched up in her arms and carried away from the Indians, now a venerable and prosperous gentleman, with children and grandchildren of his own. He read the letter with joy and astonishment; it was like a message from another world.

With what feelings, now, did he prepare to seek out the long-lost one, never doubting but that she would receive him as eagerly as he sought her, and welcome him as a deliverer from bondage! His brother Ebenezer was long dead; Mary was married, and settled in another State, where also lived Isaac, a brother born after the calamity. To them he hastened to send the good news; and as soon as arrangements might be made, these three old people set off on a long journey, by bad roads or none, to the place where they had been directed to find their sister's abode. It was no holiday work travelling in these newly-settled districts. The journey took more weeks

than it now does days; but none of them grudged the hardship in the hope of again meeting the sister from whom they had been parted just sixty years before.

At last they came to the Indian village, some miles from the nearest white settlement, and presented themselves at the house of the old chieftainess, *Ma-con-a-quā*, 'the young bear,' as her Indian name was. And that old crone who received them so shyly, hard-faced, wrinkled, and scarred, dressed in gaudy red and blue, with a savage profusion of beads and brooches—was that the child who had once been the sunshine of the Quaker home, whose fair hair and bright eyes they had so often seen in their dreams?

The meeting was scarcely less sorrowful than the parting had been. The kinsmen who had come so far were deeply agitated; but the new-found sister seemed cold and unmoved. While her brothers were pacing the floor of the cabin, struggling with their emotion, and the white sister was weeping outright, she into whose arms they would have fallen, sat beside her red-skinned daughters in stolid silence, casting suspicious glances at the strangers—*strangers!*—whom the family looked upon as having some design to take their mother from them. It was in a fit of sickness that, yearning after her old ties, she had opened her heart to Colonel Ewing; now she had withdrawn into her Indian stoicism and distrust.

But there could be no doubt as to who she was. By the help of an interpreter the Slocums began to question her. They had remembered a mark by which they could infallibly identify Frances. When a very little child, one of her brothers had accidentally struck her forefinger with a hammer, destroying the nail entirely. And, sure enough, this old woman's forefinger was thus disfigured.

'How did this happen?' asked Mr. Slocum through the interpreter, and the reply was, 'My brother hit it with a

hammer in the blacksmith's shop, a long time ago.' Here was a feature of this true story quite like the old romances. They asked her if she knew what she had been called at home, but she had forgotten. 'Was it Frances?' A tender chord was touched at last. With something like a smile she recollected her own name.

By degrees the manner of Frances and her grown-up daughters thawed somewhat as the newly-acquainted relatives saw more of one another at various interviews, and indulged a natural curiosity as to each other's ways and looks. They held what friendly intercourse they could by the help of the interpreter, and the Indian daughters showed a desire to please, and even with the sincerest flattery to imitate their visitors. They admired especially the stays and stockings of Mr. Slocum's daughters, who accompanied him on a second visit. But as soon as Frances' kinsfolk mentioned what had been the chief object of their long journey, her return with them to a civilised home, the whole family took alarm at the very idea. She positively refused. Here, she said, was her home, near the graves of her sons and her husband, who on his deathbed had charged her never to leave his people. It was of no avail that they offered to share their wealth with her and give her a comfortable home with them. Among the Indians she was rich and happy, and had an affectionate family around her; why should she wish to change?

Would she not at least pay a visit to her white friends? 'I cannot,' she replied in the figurative language of her adopted people. 'I am an old tree. I cannot move about now. I was a sapling when they took me away.' Her two daughters strongly supported her. 'The deer cannot live out of the forest,' said one, and the other added, 'The fish dies quickly out of water.' So her white friends had to return home with mingled emotions, glad to have found their sister, yet grieved

to leave her as she was, an Indian at heart, with the habits and thoughts of sixty years a thick wall between her and them.

‘When,’ says a writer in the *Philadelphia North American Review*, ‘Mr. Slocum was giving me this history, I said to him, “But could she not speak English?” “Not a word.” “Did she know her age?” “No, had no idea of it.” “But was she entirely ignorant?” “Sir, she *didn’t* know when Sunday comes.” This was indeed the consummation of ignorance in a descendant of the Puritans.’

Yet Frances, heathen as she was, led a moral and decent life for an Indian. One Quaker virtue she had never lost hold on—that which is said to be next to godliness. Among her dim memories of childhood was the way in which her careful mother used to insist on the dishes being washed and wiped after use; and her relations were agreeably surprised to find that she had taught her own daughters this great point of domestic comfort. The family, like other well-to-do Indians who lived peacefully near the settlers, were not altogether without the conveniences of civilised life. Their dwelling was a substantial log house, with outhouses and a fence round it. Besides the profusion of tawdry ornaments which are the first signs of wealth among the Indians, they had plenty of clothes and household utensils, even chairs and beds, and *one* pillow. Some of these were rather for show than use, but there was, of course, the one article of furniture of which not even the hardest brave despised the use—a looking-glass. The old lady kept fifty or sixty horses, with cattle, hogs, geese, and chickens. By her good farming, she had saved money, which she would have spent in treating herself to greater luxuries in her old age, if she had not been afraid of making her Indian neighbours jealous. Here we have a picture of Indian life which may surprise some who have no idea of the red man

but as, in the pages of Cooper, he stalks, noble and naked, through the primeval forests.

That Frances was not destitute of affection for her brothers is proved by her offering to give half her land to one of them if he would come and live in her village. This, of course, was out of the question for a respectable old gentleman with a family of his own. All their efforts to induce their Indian aunt to come to them were equally vain. She hoped to die, as she had lived, among the Indians.

But this was not to be. European emigration was making giant strides across the Continent, and now its march threatened to overwhelm the spot where the old chieftainess had rooted her affections. The American Government arranged to move the Indians to the western prairies, that their lands might fall to those who were likely to make a better use of them. By this time, however, Frances' romantic story had become widely known, and so much interest was felt in it, that Congress took measures for setting apart her farm to herself and her heirs for ever. So, when her people were moved to their new home, she was left stranded among pale faces and strange ways. She could not adapt herself to this new neighbourhood, and complained bitterly, with or without reason, of the way in which the settlers treated her. It is sad to think that the last days of the poor woman were clouded by troubles which made her declare that she no longer cared to live. In her last illness she refused all medical aid, and died in 1847, having passed the threescore and ten years of human life. On a beautiful green knoll, after all her sorrows and vicissitudes, she was laid to rest with the rites of Christian burial which were her birthright, though her lot had been thus strangely cast among the heathen.

CHAPTER V.

INDIAN CAPTIVITY.



THE commonest and the saddest stories of the backwoods are those of Indian captivity. How many hundreds of men, women, and children were torn from their homes, perhaps after being obliged to stand by and witness the murder of those dearest to them in the world, then hurried for hundreds of miles through the gloomy forest, every unwilling step

taking them farther from friends and the abodes of civilisation! The fate of many of these victims is as unknown as if their bones were still lying unburied in the forests; many also came back to tell and sometimes to write the story of their sufferings and of their deliverance.

These 'tragedies of the wilderness' are for the most part narrated with little art, but there is something unspeakably pathetic in the very baldness and simplicity of the common-

place phrases by which their writers record in detail the keenest pangs that can wring the heart of humanity, the most mournful scenes that can make us shudder even in security and ease—the sudden onset of the lurking savages ; the panting flight ; the desperate struggle ; the master of the house weltering on his own threshold in the blood of his manly sons ; the pale mother vainly imploring for her little ones ; the tender infant dashed against the doorpost in the mad rage of slaughter ; the hasty plundering and the ready torch ; the horrified survivors dragged away, with one last look at the blazing homestead which a few minutes have turned into a tomb of charred corpses ; the forced march that for the bound and bleeding prisoners has no end but a dismal prospect of tortures, perhaps death, at the best a lifelong separation from their own people, while beside them stalks the ruthless warrior, grinly hideous in his paint, gloating over the still reeking trophy at his girdle ; the scalp of husband or wife, parent or child, displayed before eyes that, the strain of excitement having worn off, now melt at the sight into most miserable and helpless tears, till terror and woe give place to unutterable despair.

But little could tears avail. The object of the retreating marauders was of course to hasten beyond the reach of pursuit, and to conceal, as far as possible, the road they were taking. If any unfortunate should be too young or too weak to keep up with their rapid march, or in any other way proved troublesome to them, they thought nothing of ending the difficulty with a blow of the tomahawk. Fancy the feelings of an agonized mother, staggering under the weight of her child, and vainly trying to hush its screams. In vain ! Then if the poor woman sank fainting to the ground, or in a fit of frantic passion refused to stir a step beyond the darling corpse, and cried out for death rather than endure such wretchedness, the

monsters, with their ramrods or with switches cut from the thickets, would flog her till she came to her senses enough to be dragged on.

If she were capable of receiving consolation from this, one shameful terror the wife or maiden might for the present dismiss from her mind. The Indian brave thought little of inflicting pain on women, but while on the war-path his notions of honour and religion strictly forbade him to offer them any further injury.

A keen watch was kept upon the prisoners who showed more self-possession, lest by breaking twigs or tearing leaves they should leave traces to guide the sharp-eyed pursuers; and the man who came last in the file would poke up the trodden grass with a long stick to remove all marks of their passage. If pursued, the Indians frequently made short work with their prisoners by killing them, so as to secure the much-coveted scalp and prevent them from being rescued. When the band was large, it was usual to break up into smaller parties, taking different routes, to perplex any party that might be following in their trail. The prisoners were divided among these parties, and their last consolation disappeared when they were thus separated from the fellow-sufferers to whom alone they could look for sympathy. A hurried farewell in the forest, and the remnants of a family would be forced on their various ways, perhaps never to meet again.

As they trudged along, their sad reflections were not the only burden which the captives had to bear. They were loaded with the baggage of the Indians, consisting mainly of the property that had lately been their own. Hunger was sometimes added to their other sufferings; and for weeks, travelling over the frozen snow, they might have to subsist on scanty supplies of such food as roots and acorns, or the scrapings of the bark of trees, and the unwholesome moss known as

tripe de roche. But if the party had any corn or meat, it was commonly shared among all alike when at nightfall they made a camp of stakes and bark, and in strange companionship reposed their weary limbs around the light of a fire that sent shadowy glimmers through the dark glades, and tinged both red and white faces with a flickering umber.

But what appetite could that man or woman have had who saw his savage neighbour handling the well-known scalp, scraping it, drying it, and stretching it on a hoop? And how could these poor people lay themselves down to rest in peace beside the murderer, his hands still foul with the blood of their friend and relations? Then, if ever, they must have felt the blessedness of sleep, in which the wretched may forget his sorrow, and the hopeless find happiness but in a dream. And then, if ever, they must have raised a cry for help and pity to Heaven, though its stars might be hid from them by the dark foliage overhead, and too seldom they might have turned their thoughts upwards while the sun was still shining on their lives.

So long as they were near the settlements, the Indians exercised great care in securing their prisoners for the night. The poor fellow would perhaps be made a spread-eagle of, stretched on his back along the bare ground, with arms and legs fastened to four saplings or strong stakes; or perhaps a 'tug'—that is, a strip of hide—was tied round his waist, the ends fastened to two Indians who slept on either side of him, and would be roused by his slightest motion. Sometimes, if he were to be treated as an especially artful or obnoxious enemy, he would be pinioned in a more painful manner, with his arms drawn behind his back, and his wrists tied so tight together as to prevent the circulation of the blood and cause intolerable pain.

As the danger of rescue seemed to be left behind, however, the captors commonly relaxed the speed of their march and the vigilance of their guard. They would let the captives sleep unbound, taking the unknown wilderness around to be a sure enough prison. Strange to say, with all their habits of caution and treachery, the Indians seldom took the trouble to set a watch through the night, but all slumbered confidently by the embers of their fire, and sometimes trusted in vain to their fine senses for rousing them at the stealthy step of an enemy, who might have every man in the camp at his mercy before a single one could seize the arms which always lay ready to the warrior's hand. Then the settlers appear often to have possessed some of the peculiar talent of the Davenport brothers for manipulating their bonds. So, in a surprising number of cases, the story of captivity ends unexpectedly in a clever or daring escape, on which the whole mind of the prisoner had been bent from the first moment, and the opportunity watched for day after day and hour after hour with a patient vigilance equal to that of the red men themselves.

Adair, in his *Observations on the American Indians*, tells a story of a young Catawba brave who was taken by the Senecas after killing seven of them in a running fight. Exulting, they led the prisoner to their town, and the whole nation were eager to feast their revenge on the agonies of such a distinguished warrior. But as he was being brought to the place of torture, he suddenly broke away, plunged into the river, swam under the bullet-spattered water like an otter, landed unhurt on the opposite bank, and with an insulting gesture disappeared into the woods. Nor was this all; instead of making speed for home, he remained hanging about the path of danger till he came upon a camp of his pursuers, fast asleep, and killed every one of them with their own weapons.

The above writer gives this as an instance of Indian daring, and hints that in a similar situation a white prisoner would have yielded more readily to circumstances. But the truth is, that with ingenuity and resolution sharpened to a desperate point by their fate, even white women and children were known to strike a deadly blow for their liberty. One of the most remarkable stories of the kind is that of the Johnson boys. Here it is, as told in the words of Henry, the younger of the two brothers, after he had passed the threescore and ten years allotted to man's life:—

‘When I was between eleven and twelve years old (I think it was the fall of 1788), I was taken prisoner with my brother John, who was about eighteen months older than I. The circumstances are as follows:—On Saturday evening we were out with an older brother, and came home late in the evening. One of us had lost a hat, and John and I went back the next day to look for it. We found the hat, and sat down on a log and were cracking nuts. After a short time we saw two men coming down from the direction of the house. From their dress, we took them to be two of our neighbours, James Perdue and J. Russell. We paid but little attention to them till they came quite near us. To escape by flight was now impossible, had we been disposed to try it. We sat still until they came up to us. One of them said, “How do, brudder?” My brother then asked them if they were Indians, and they answered in the affirmative and said we must go with them. One of them had a blue buckskin, which he gave my brother to carry, and, without further ceremony, we took up the line of march for the wilderness, not knowing whether we should ever return to the cheerful home which we had left; and not having much love for our commanding officers, of course we obeyed orders rather tardily.

‘One of the Indians walked about ten steps before, and the

other about the same distance behind us. After travelling some distance, we halted in a deep hollow and sat down. They took out their knives and whet them, and talked some time in the Indian tongue, which we could not understand. I thought I would rather die than go with them. The most of my trouble was that my father and mother would be fretting after us, not knowing what had become of us. I told my brother that I thought they were going to kill us; and I believe he thought so too, for he began to talk to them, and told them that his father was cross to him and made him work hard, and that he did not like hard work, that he would rather be a hunter and live in the woods. This seemed to please them, for they put up their knives and talked more lively and pleasantly to us. We returned the same familiarity, and many questions passed between us; all parties were very inquisitive. They asked my brother which way home was, and he told them the contrary way every time they would ask him, although he knew the way very well. This would make them laugh; they thought we were lost, and that we knew no better.

‘They conducted us over Short Creek Hills in search of horses, but found none; so we continued on foot. Night came on; we halted in a low hollow about three miles from Carpenter’s Fort, and about four from the place where they first took us. Our route being somewhat circuitous and full of zigzags, we made headway but slowly. As night began to close in around us, I became fretful; my brother encouraged me by whispering that we would kill the Indians that night.

‘After they had selected the place of the encampment, one of them scouted round the camp, while the other struck fire, which was done by stopping the touch-hole of the gun and flashing powder in the pan. After the Indian got the fire kindled, he reprimed the gun, and went to an old stump to

get some dry tinderwood for fire; and while he was thus employed my brother John took the gun, cocked it, and was about to shoot the Indian. But I was alarmed, fearing the other might be close by, and might be able to overpower us; so I remonstrated against his shooting, and took hold of the gun and prevented the shot. I at the same time begged him to wait till night, and I would help him to kill them both.

'The other Indian came back about dark, when we took our supper, such as it was—some corn parched on the coals, and some roasted pork. We then talked some time, and went to bed on the naked ground, to try to rest and study out the best mode of attack. They put us between them, that they might be the better able to guard us. After a while one of the Indians, supposing we were asleep, got up and stretched himself down on the other side of the fire, and soon began to snore.

'John, who had been watching every motion, found they were sound asleep, and whispered to me to get up. We got up as carefully as possible. John took the gun which the Indian struck fire with, cocked it, and placed it in the direction of the head of one of the Indians. He then took a tomahawk and drew it over the head of the other. I pulled the trigger, and he struck at the same instant. The blow, falling too far back on the neck, only stunned the Indian. He attempted to spring to his feet, uttering most hideous yells. Although my brother repeated the blows with some effect, the combat became terrible and somewhat doubtful. The Indian, however, was forced to yield to the blows he received upon his head, and in a short time he lay quiet and still at our feet.

'After we were satisfied that they were both dead, and fearing there were others close by, we hurried off, and took nothing with us but the gun I shot with. We took our course towards the river, and in about three-quarters of a mile we found a path which led to Carpenter's Fort. My brother here

hung up his hat, that we might know on our return where to turn off to find our camp. We got back to the fort a little before daybreak. We related our adventure, and next day a small party went back with my brother, and found the Indian that was tomahawked. The other had crawled away a short distance with the gun. A skeleton and a gun were found, some time after, near the place where we had encamped.'

These boys had no doubt often heard a terrible old story from the annals of New England, that in their day was familiar to hunters reposing by the camp fire, and children gathered round the blazing hearth in the long winter nights.

Thomas Dustin was a settler at Haverhill, in Massachusetts. It was about the end of the seventeenth century, when, from fear of their Indian neighbours and the incursions of the French from Canada, every sturdy English farmer knew that he reaped and sowed at the risk of his life. One morning, as Dustin was at work, he heard the dreaded yell, and saw a band of Indians in their war-paint. Without an instant's delay he flew home to warn his family, which consisted of eight young children, a nurse, and his wife, who was then lying in bed with her new-born infant. Bursting into the house, he called to the children to fly for their lives. But how was he to save his wife? Before she could be moved, the savage enemy was upon them in irresistible numbers. The distracted husband could only rush out with his gun, leap on horseback, and gallop after his children.

His intention had been to snatch up one and ride away, despairing of being able to put them all out of danger. But when he came up with the helpless band, he could not find it in his heart to abandon any of the dear little ones, who, in their terror, looked to him for protection. He made up his mind to defend them to the last, then to share their fate. Hastening them on, he remained in the rear, and for more

than a mile carried on a flying skirmish with a party of the Indians who were following hard upon them. By coolness and good fortune, he was thus able to hold in check the pursuers, skulking behind trees and fences, keeping at a respectful distance from his piece, and firing upon the fugitives without effect, till, unhurt, they reached the shelter of a house.

In the meanwhile the sick mother was left exposed to all the outrages of savage fury. The faithful nurse attempted to escape with the baby, but the Indians dragged it from her, and dashed out its brains against an apple tree. They forced Mrs. Dustin to rise and accompany them, without giving her time to dress herself properly, or even to put shoes on her feet, though they did not neglect to plunder the house.

The marauding party now retreated in all haste, carrying their prisoners with them. Miserable must have been the sufferings of the two white women, one of them so rudely roused from a bed of sickness. The bitter March winds were blowing, the ground was covered with snow and slush, and they had to sleep on it, under the open air, night after night. Food was scarce. Horror at the inhuman butchery of the child, anxiety as to the fate of the others, fear as to what might await them at the end of the journey, must have wrung the minds of this hapless mother and her companion. It shows of what stuff the wives of these bold pioneers were made, that they did not sink under the combined weight of so many trials and hardships.

The captives arrived safely at the home of their master, which was on an island in the river Connecticut, now part of New Hampshire. His family consisted of thirteen persons, one of them an English boy named Samuel Leonardson, who had been taken prisoner a year before, and had learned something of the Indian language. Through him the two women soon heard that they were about to be taken farther up the

country to an Indian village, and on their arrival there would be forced to run the gauntlet. This prospect, and the careless watch which appeared to be kept upon them, made them resolve on an attempt to escape. They took the boy Lennardson into their counsel, and set him on asking one of the Indians how to strike a person so as to despatch him instantly, and how to take off a scalp. The Indian, looking on the boy as one of themselves by this time, thought it very natural that, like their own youth, he should be curious about killing, and eager to enter upon what to them was the business of life. Without any suspicion of the use to which this information would be put, he good-naturedly showed the would-be warrior how to scalp. As for killing, he laid a finger on his temple, pointing out the place where a good blow would not need to be given twice. These instructions were duly passed on to Mrs. Dustin, who, in the stern spirit of a Puritan Jael, prepared to carry them out.

At night, when the rest were all fast asleep, she stealthily arose and awoke her confederates. Arming themselves with tomahawks, they quickly despatched the sleeping Indians, children and all, except one squaw who escaped, and a boy, whom they spared out of gratitude for kindness which he had shown them. The boy Lennardson put in practice the man's own lesson on the very Indian who had so well taught him the trade of slaughter. Before daybreak all was over, and there was no one to hinder their flight. Taking what provisions they could find, and scuttling all the canoes but one, to prevent pursuit, they paddled down the river. It soon, however, occurred to Mrs. Dustin that when they arrived at home their neighbours would not be inclined to believe their story without further proof; so they returned, and took the scalps of the dead Indians.

There were still dangers and hardships to be undergone, and

they were in constant alarm of being overtaken by some of the same tribe, informed of what had happened and eager for revenge. But at last they safely reached home, where no one had expected to see them again, and where the mother also had the unexpected joy of being reunited to her husband and children, whom she had given up as dead.

In the fierce temper of the times, the desperate deed of these women excited the warmest enthusiasm. Fifty pounds, then a much larger sum than now, were paid as a reward for the ten Indian scalps, and the fame of Mrs. Dustin spread quickly all over a country in hourly dread of outrages and scenes like those through which she had passed.

Several chapters might be filled with instances in which prisoners not only got safely off, but often contrived to turn the tables on their captors. There was Alexander M'Connell of Kentucky, who, falling into the hands of five Indians, showed such good humour and apparent resignation to his fate that they did not think it necessary to secure him very closely. But one night he wriggled himself out of his slight bonds, and did not steal away without taking care that there should be no pursuit. Silently he gathered up the loaded rifles of the party, hid away three of them, with both hands aimed two at as many sleeping Indians, and pulled the triggers at the same moment with deadly effect. Up sprang the three other Indians. Before they could understand what had happened, M'Connell had reached the concealed weapons and shot two more; the fifth fled with a yell of horror. Then the backwoodsman picked out the best of the rifles and started for home.

Such attempts were, of course, not always successful. A young man named Thompson, being taken prisoner, thought he might as well try to escape in the way so many others had done. The Indians were sleeping all round him, each man having his arms wrapped up with him in his blanket

Thompson could find no weapon but a big stone ; with this he proposed to knock one of the Indians on the head, snatch his tomahawk, and take his chance of disposing of the rest. Having felt about in the dark for the Indian's temple, he delivered his blow, but did not hit the mark fair. The stone only struck the sleeper with sufficient force to make him jump up howling, and in an instant the others were on their feet. Thompson looked rather foolish to be caught in this way. He had presence of mind enough to throw away the stone, and when he pretended that the blow had been given only with his hand, the other Indians jeered at their comrade for making such an outcry over such a small matter. But they took care to make surer of their prisoner for the future.

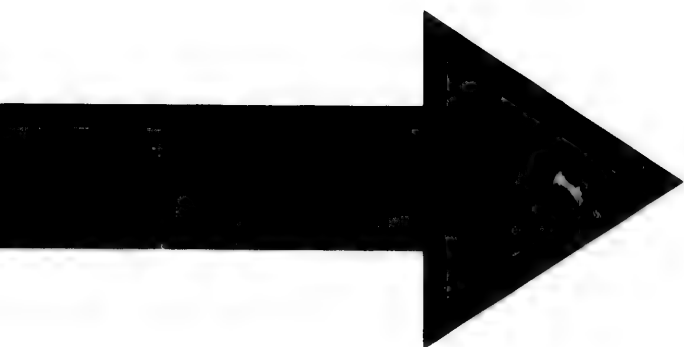
He was now tied every night, but still his mind ran on chances of escape. One day they set him to gather fuel for a fire. He moved about with apparent carelessness, picking up sticks and throwing them into a heap. By degrees he took himself farther and farther off, as if he could not find fuel near the place where the Indians were lounging and waiting for the fire. When he had got as far from them as he could without exciting suspicion, he suddenly flung down his armful of sticks, and was off like a deer. The Indians ran after him, but it was not easy to catch a strong young fellow with so much at stake. He reached the Susquehanna safely and found a canoe, in which he allowed himself to drift down the stream. When he came to the settlements, he was so exhausted that he could not rise in the canoe, and might have perished if some person had not thought of looking into it.

Let the poor fellow get clear away without discovery, or fairly distance his pursuers in the momentous trial of speed, he still knew that before many hours had passed the human blood-hounds might be on his trail. He durst not stop, save for an

anxious moment, like an alarmed stag snuffing the air for signs of danger, but must toil on through swamps and jungles, thorns and rocks, till nature failed him and he was ready to sink on the ground. Then there was close hiding in some hollow tree or some dense thicket, where perhaps with strained ears he caught the voices and footsteps of the searchers moving round on every side. There is a story told of a man who crept for the night into a huge hollow log. Next morning the Indians were sitting on it and discoursing how to retake him. But through the night a friendly spider had spun its web over the opening, so they never thought of looking inside. And in the branches of a fallen tree a mother has stood trembling for two hours with her infant pressed close to her breast to hush the cries which had guided a savage so near their place of refuge that she could hear his ramrod working in the barrel. Fortunately the warmth and the nourishment made the child fall asleep; then 'my own heart was the only thing I feared, and that was so loud that I was apprehensive it would betray me.' This last is a feature common to many of these stories: the bold hunter's imagination and the tender woman's wrought the same terror in their excited senses.

Miles and miles of tangled, pathless forest would yet lie between the anxious wanderer and his home. The experienced woodsman could steer his course in all weathers; he knew that on the north side of the trees the bark and moss was thicker, while the branches grew more luxuriantly to the south. But many must have perished vainly seeking the path by which they had come, or, in their dread of pursuit, taking a wide circuit from it and losing their way in the untrodden wilderness. A bewildered unfortunate would even in his confusion make a complete circle, and in the morning find himself, with a start of horror, at the ashes of the very camp from which he had escaped in the darkness.





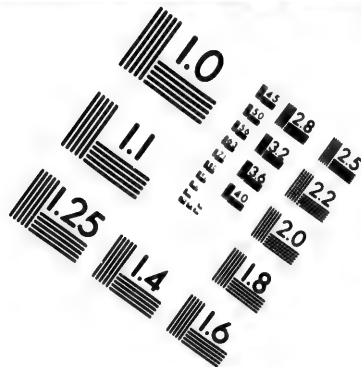
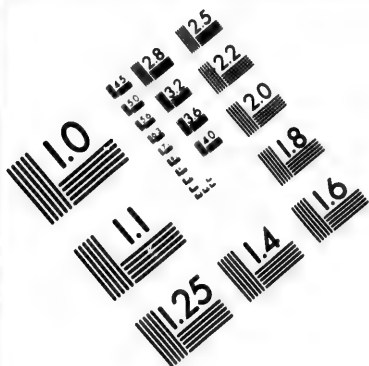
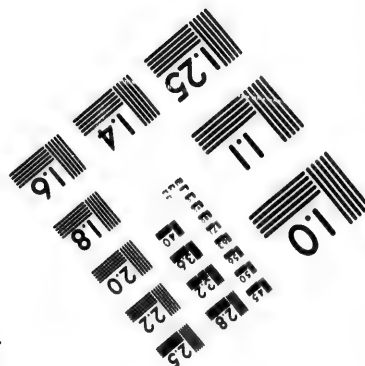
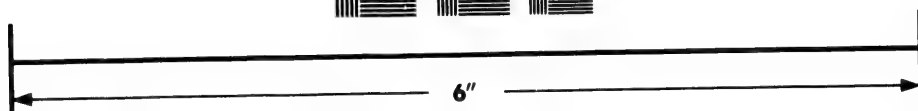
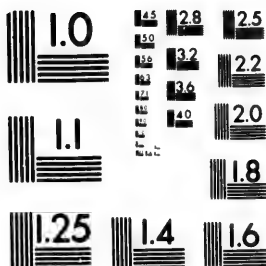


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It might be that he had to lie hid for days, disabled by undressed wounds. Weapons, clothes, and food were probably wanting to the fugitive. 'Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter,' is a text that must have often been remembered by one in such a case. He was in fear, day and night, of wild beasts; to seek shelter might be to disturb the lodging of a hungry bear, to rest might at any time tempt the fangs of the deadly rattlesnake. He durst not make a fire, lest the glow or the smoke should bring his enemies to the spot. His clothes hanging in rags, his emaciated limbs torn and bruised, covered with blood and dust, he presented such an object that he feared his own people might fire on him if he fell in with them. But starved, shivering, and ready to drop at every step, he struggled on through the awful solitudes, till at last, in some never-to-be-forgotten hour, his ears caught the tinkling of a cow-bell, or the stroke of an axe, the sweetest music he had ever heard, for it told him that he was near the abodes of his own people, and might once more draw his breath in security.

Yet another trial might await him, the bitterest of all. Could he have borne such sufferings but in the hope of a friendly welcome from the first white men he met? But for many an escaped prisoner the goal of safety was some broad stream such as the Ohio, which divided the settlements of one race from the hunting-grounds of the other. And when he gained the bank and rapturously feasted his eyes on the sight of a party of hunters or boatmen across the swift current, his appearance would be for them a sign of suspicion and alarm. It was too well known that the Indians made use of cowardly or base whites to decoy the settlers on to the dangerous bank where an ambush was lurking among the bushes. In such a life of danger, few men would trust the first promptings of a kindly heart. Vainly, with feeble gestures

and cries, the fugitive might declare his plight and entreat his countrymen to come within rifle-shot and carry him over. In wretched despair he would see the boat paddling quickly away to the farther side, and his own countrymen shunning him like the plague, while home and safety were in sight—'so near and yet so far.' At the best they would approach with distressing caution, holding a parley with him from the mid stream, and forcing him perhaps to plunge into the freezing water, or to drag his aching limbs for miles along the shore, before they would consent to take him on board, even then with cocked rifles and keenly-watching eyes, as for the reception of an enemy rather than a friend.

But once his case was clearly recognised, the restored captive need fear no want of sympathy from men upon whom every day might bring a like fate. The first cabin would heap all its stores of rough kindness on such a guest. It were well for him if, exhausted by privation and exposure, his constitution did not break down now that the terrible strain of the last few days or weeks was suddenly removed; well, too, if his judicious entertainers did not fully gratify his ravenous desire for food. And must it not have seemed worth all the pain, all the misery, to be able again to lie down among friends and to take his fill of sleep in peace!

A short rest would restore his powers of mind and body, and he might set out for home to bring the news of his own safety—happy, indeed, if home and family had not been destroyed by the same hands that carried him into the wilderness. But if this wanderer had been the only victim, with what a heart must he have beheld the smoke curling above his log cabin as he strode once more into the familiar clearing, and heard the dear voices of those to whom he was indeed returning as one from beyond the grave!

Reader, if you and I had known such a chapter in our

lives, should we not have found it harder than we think to take a Christian, or even a philosophic, view of our Indian enemies? Few white men indeed, in the very hearing of these stories, could hold their hearts in patience to remind themselves of what a certain rhyming Quaker does not forget to be the moral of one of the sorrowfullest records of captivity:—

‘Vengeance with vengeance holds perpetual war :
Love only can o’er enmity prevail ;—
Sulphur and pitch, absurdly who prepare
To quench devouring fire, are sure to fail.’

If such might be the sufferings of so many who escaped from Indian captivity, what had those to expect who were not so fortunate? A prisoner in Indian war was doomed, without further offence or sentence, to the most cruel death that could be devised, after running the gauntlet of the conquerors’ exulting rage; it was only through favour or policy that he might be spared. The horrors of that fate will be described in another chapter. Meanwhile we will look at the lot of the prisoners who were adopted into the tribe of their captors. This was a regular institution among the Indians, its evident purpose being to fill up their ranks thinned by war, for an Indian tribe could no more than a Scotch clan afford to decrease in numbers. Young people were naturally preferred for adoption. It sometimes happened that a bereaved family would send to the frontiers and have a white child stolen for them, as by the gipsies in our old stories, upon whom they would lavish all the tenderness due to their own lost one. Sometimes, also, the honour, such as it was, of adoption was conferred in times of peace upon white men whom the Indians desired to distinguish with special favour. The Canadian trader and interpreter Long,

who went through the process of what may be called *honorary* adoption at the hands of the Chippeways, thus describes it:—

‘A feast is prepared of dog’s flesh boiled in bear’s grease, with huckleberries, of which it is expected that every one should heartily partake. When the repast is over, the war-song is sung in the following words: “Master of Life, view us well! We receive a brother warrior, who appears to have sense, shows strength in his arm, and does not refuse his body to the enemy!” After the war-song, if the person does not discover any signs of fear, he is regarded with reverence and esteem—courage, in the opinion of the savages, being regarded as not only indispensable, but as the greatest recommendation. He is then seated on a beaver robe, and presented with a pipe of war to smoke, which is put round to every warrior, and a wampum belt is thrown over his neck. . . . When the pipe has gone round, a sweating-house is prepared with six long poles fixed in the ground and pointed at the top; it is then covered with skins and blankets to exclude the air, and the area of the house will contain only three persons. The person to be adopted is then stripped naked, and enters the hut with two chiefs; two large stones, made red hot, are brought in and thrown on the ground; water is then brought in a bark dish, and sprinkled on the ground with cedar branches, the steam arising from which puts the person into a most profuse perspiration, and opens the pores to receive the other part of the ceremony.

‘When the perspiration is at the height, he quits the house and jumps into the water. Immediately on coming out, a blanket is thrown over him, and he is led to the chief’s hut, where he undergoes the following operation:—Being extended on his back, the chief draws the figure he intends to make with a pointed stick dipped in water, in which gunpowder has been dissolved; after which, with ten

needles dipped in vermilion and fixed in a small wooden frame, he pricks the delineated parts, and, where the bolder outlines occur, he incises the flesh with a gun flint; the vacant spaces, or those not marked with vermilion, are rubbed in with gunpowder, which produces the variety of red and blue; the wounds are then seared with pink wood, to prevent them from festering.

'This operation, which is performed at intervals, lasts two or three days. Every morning the parts are washed with cold water, in which is infused an herb called *pockqucesegau*, which resembles English box, and is mixed by the Indians with the tobacco they smoke, to take off the strength. During the process the war-songs are sung, accompanied by a rattle hung round with hawk bells, called *chessaquoy*, which is kept shaking to stifle the groans such pains must naturally occasion. Upon the ceremony being completed, they give the party a name; that which they allotted to me was *Amik*, or Beaver.'

This citizenship of the forest, we see, had its drawbacks as well as its advantages. The sweating-house was a common luxury among the Indians, being used as a medical remedy as well as on occasions of solemnity. As for the process of tattooing, our sailors have experiences to compare with those of Mr. Long. More painful was plucking out their hair, except on one part of the head, which white men had sometimes to submit to that they might be in the fashion of their new society.

The ceremony of adoption seems frequently to have taken the simpler form of ducking the neophyte in water, to wash the white blood out of him in symbolical fashion. Prisoners who did not know the language or the customs of their captors, were apt to misunderstand the intention of this ceremony. John M'Cullough, a boy of eight years old, might well be frightened, when, as he tells us,

'Two young fellows took me by the hand, and led me to the river. We got into a canoe, and paddled about thirty or forty yards from the shore, when they laid down their paddles, and laid hold of me by the wrists, and plunged me over head and ears under the water, holding me down till I was almost smothered, then drew me up to get breath. This they repeated several times. I had no other thought but that they were going to drown me. At last one of them said, "*Me no kill im, me wash im.*" I pleaded with them to let me into shallow water, and I would wash myself; accordingly they did. I then began to rub myself. They signified to me to dive; I dipped my face into the water, and raised it up as quick as I could. One of them stepped out of the canoe, and laid hold of me on the back of my neck, and held me down to the bottom till I was almost smothered before he would let me go. I then waded out. They put a new ruffled shirt on me, telling me that I was then an Indian.'

Young James Smith had a similar experience, in his case three squaws being the executioners, as he supposed them, who ducked him and scrubbed him, while he, imagining that they were for drowning him, struggled and entreated, to the great amusement of the spectators on the bank.

We do not, however, always hear of such a rite being gone through in the case of prisoners taken in war. Then, the one indispensable preliminary of adoption was the sound beating by which, once for all, they were cleared of the offence of belonging to a hostile people. When he had run the gauntlet, the captive might straightway be taken into the wigwam of his new relations, and thenceforth would be treated like one of themselves.

But the old relations? Here might be the bitterest drop in the cup of captivity. If parents and children, husband and wife, had hitherto been suffered to bear each other company

through all their troubles, the survivors of the hapless family must now be torn asunder, to become members of separate wigwams, perhaps of separate tribes, among the pitiless savages. To what point a mother's heart might be wrung in such a parting, let us learn from the unaffected narrative of Mrs. Jemima Howe :—

‘And now came on the season when the Indians began to prepare for a winter’s hunt. I was ordered to return my poor child to those of them who still claimed it as their property. This was a severe trial. The babe clung to my bosom with all its might, but I was obliged to pluck it thence, and deliver it, shrieking and screaming enough to penetrate a heart of stone, into the hands of those unfeeling wretches, whose tender mercies may be termed cruel. It was soon carried off by a hunting-party of those Indians to a place called Messiskow, at the lower end of Lake Champlain, whither, in about a month after, it was my fortune to follow them. I had preserved my milk in hopes of seeing my beloved child again. And here I found it, it is true, but in a condition that afforded me no great satisfaction, it being greatly emaciated and almost starved. I took it in my arms, put its face to mine, and it instantly bit me with such violence that it seemed as if I must have parted with a piece of my cheek. I was permitted to lodge with it that and the two following nights ; but every morning that intervened, the Indians—I suppose, on purpose to torment me—sent me away to another wigwam which stood at a little distance, though not so far from the one in which my distressed infant was confined but that I could plainly hear its incessant cries and heartrending lamentations. In this deplorable condition I was obliged to take my leave of it on the morning of the third day after my arrival at the place. We moved down the lake several miles the same day ; and the night following was remarkable on account of the great

earthquake which terribly shook that howling wilderness. Among the islands hereabouts we spent the winter season, often shifting our quarters, and moving about from one place to another, our family consisting of three persons only besides myself—viz., my late mother's¹ daughter, whom therefore I called my sister, her sanhap, and a pappoose. They once left me alone two dismal nights; and when they returned to me again, perceiving them smile at each other, I asked, "What is the matter?" They replied that two of my children were no more; one of which, they said, died a natural death, and the other was knocked on the head. I did not utter many words, but my heart was sorely pained within me, and my mind exceedingly troubled with strange and awful ideas. I often imagined, for instance, that I plainly saw the naked carcasses of my deceased children hanging upon the limbs of trees, as the Indians are wont to hang the raw hides of those beasts they take in hunting.

'It was not long, however, before it was so ordered by kind Providence that I should be relieved in a good measure from these horrid imaginations; for as I was walking one day upon the ice, observing a smoke at some distance upon the land, it must proceed, thought I, from the fire of some Indian hut, and who knows but some one of my poor children may be there? My curiosity, thus excited, led me to the place, and there I found my son Caleb, a little boy between two and three years old, whom I had lately buried in sentiment at least, or rather imagined to have been deprived of life, and perhaps also denied a decent grave. I found him likewise in tolerable health and circumstances, under the protection of a fond Indian mother, and, moreover, had the happiness of lodging with him in my arms one joyful night. Again we shifted our quarters, and when we had travelled eight or ten miles upon the snow and

¹ Her Indian mother by adoption.

ice, came to a place where the Indians manufactured sugar, which they extracted from the maple tree. Here an Indian came to visit us whom I knew, and [who] could speak English. He asked me why I did not go to see my son Squire. I replied that I had lately been informed that he was dead. He assured me that he was yet alive, and but two or three miles off, on the opposite side of the lake. At my request he gave me the best direction he could to the place of his abode. I resolved to embrace the first opportunity that offered of endeavouring to search it out. While I was busy in contemplating this affair, the Indian obtained a little bread, of which they gave me a small share. I did not taste a morsel of it myself, but saved it all for my poor child, if I should be so lucky as to find him. At length, having obtained of my keepers leave to be absent for one day, I set off early in the morning, and steering as well as I could according to the direction which the friendly Indian had given me, I quickly found the place which he had so accurately marked out. I beheld, as I drew nigh, my little son without the camp; but he looked, thought I, like a starved and mangy puppy that had been wallowing in the ashes. I took him in my arms, and he spoke to me these words in the Indian tongue: "Mother, are you come?" I took him into the wigwam with me, and observing a number of Indian children in it, I distributed all the bread which I had reserved for my own child among them all, otherwise I should have given great offence. My little boy appeared to be very fond of his new mother, [but] kept as near me as possible while I stayed; and when I told him I must go, he fell as though he had been knocked down with a club. But having recommended him to the care of Him that made him, when the day was far spent, and the time would permit me to stay no longer, I departed, you may well suppose, with a heavy load at my heart. The tidings I had received of the death of my

youngest child had, a little before, been confirmed to me beyond a doubt, but I could not mourn so heartily for the deceased as for the living child.'

Sometimes prisoners were handed over to white people, who paid the Indians a ransom for them, either out of charity or from a business-like appreciation of the value of cheap labour. The French in Canada, and afterwards the British, often bought American captives in this way, and the person thus sold might be held practically as a slave, unless repurchased by his friends, or till the end of the war between the two civilised nations brought about an exchange of prisoners. It must be remembered that in the last century, the colonies had a trade in white as well as in black flesh. Not only was the labour of convicts, and of poor kidnapped children, bought by masters, but a free able-bodied emigrant took it quite as a matter of course to supply with his person the deficiency of his purse, and would bind himself for a term of years as 'apprentice' to whoever purchased his services by paying his passage across the Atlantic. So to most of the settlers there was nothing degrading or unendurable in such servitude.

In the war of the revolution, a girl named Young was carried off from Pennsylvania and taken by the Indians to the neighbourhood of Montreal. Here she fell to the lot of an Indian squaw, who set her to work like a servant. Miss Young's first intention was to tackle cheerfully and diligently to her tasks, hoping thus to gain the favour of her new mistress. But an old negro woman, with equal cunning and good nature, set her on a better plan. 'Pretend to be stupid and awkward,' was the old darkey's advice; 'then the Indians will not think you worth keeping, and will sell you to the whites.' The prisoner took this well-meant hint, and proved such an unserviceable domestic, that her mistress was soon glad to get rid of her, and sold her to an English gentleman in

Montreal. Now comes the romance of the story. Her new master turned out to be a namesake and a distant relation of her own; so, treated as a member of the family, she remained with them till the end of the war.

Another young captive, Mary Fowler, after her family had made vain attempts to ransom her from the Canadian Indians, was rescued through the friendly connivance of a French doctor. He advised Mary to sham sickness; then the Indians called him in, but, as may be supposed, the patient did not get any better under his care, till at last she was given out to be at the point of death, and the politic doctor persuaded the Indians to sell her for a hundred francs, lest she should die on their hands. There are also stories proving that even the wicked 'Tories' sometimes showed a natural humanity, and took no little trouble in coaxing or cheating their red allies out of the victims that had fallen into their power; his must have been a hard heart, indeed, who could see with indifference men of his own blood and tongue in such a plight, or not feel somewhat ashamed of having helped to bring them into it.

The lot of the adopted prisoners, however, was not always such a pitiable one in their own eyes. The reason of its being so hard to make the Indians part with these prisoners, was that they looked upon them as their own flesh and blood. Each captive so spared had been chosen to fill the place of some lost member of the tribe, whose name, rank, relations, even whose merits and demerits, were henceforth his own. His satisfaction with his new way of life, therefore, would largely depend on the terms upon which he entered it. Thus in the case of the Gilbert family, one member of it who had taken the place of a worthless old man, thought fit for nothing but drudgery and contempt, was treated accordingly, and naturally did not like it; while his cousin Benjamin, an urchin of twelve, having been adopted as a chief's son, decorated

with a medal hung round his neck, and looked up to as a future hero of the tribe, found himself much more at home in this situation, and was not nearly so anxious for a change. We have seen from the story of Frances Slocum how effectual adoption might be in making a white person an Indian in all but the skin; and this was by no means an uncommon case.

Let us follow the fortunes of Jonathan Alder, who was a mere child of eight or nine when he was captured by the Indians near his mother's house on the borders of Virginia. He and his brother David had been trying to catch some horses. At the first sight of the Indians, David turned to run, but poor Jonathan was probably able to do nothing but cry. Before long, to his horror, he saw his brother dragged back, with a spear sticking through his body; the spear being pulled out, the boy turned white and sank on the ground. The other brother was hurried away from the spot, but one of the Indians remained for a minute, and presently rejoined the party with a bleeding scalp.

After the first day's march, Jonathan was so fatigued that an Indian was about to put an end to him also, and he saw behind him the shadow of a man with uplifted tomahawk. But his pleasant face, as he turned round, disarmed the savage, who, noticing that he had black hair, thought he would make 'a good Indian,' and took him to a village of the Mingos. Here, to begin with, he was obliged to run the gauntlet of the Indian children, armed with switches, and, no doubt, delighted at such a good opportunity of playing the bully. Then he was adopted into the family of a chief, who had three daughters bearing the English names of Mary, Hannah, and Sally; so that this tribe seems to have been one that had come into contact with the settlers, and lost some of their primitive barbarism.

The first thing his new mother did was to wash him all

over with soap and water ; then he was dressed in Indian costume—little leggings, breech-cloth, and moccasins. All the family received him well except Sally, who appears to have ‘had a tongue with a tang,’ and to have played the part of the proverbial stepmother to the young stranger. The old people, who had adopted him in place of a lost son, were most kind and tender : he says they could not have treated their own child better, and that he cannot express the affection he bore towards them.

But naturally he was home-sick, thinking of his own mother and brothers, and it was poor comfort to be told by his new parents that ‘one day’ he should see them again. For more than a month he used to go out every day, to sit under a tree near the village, and cry for hours. Everything was strange around the poor little fellow : he could not understand the language of his new companions ; he had bad health ; it was some time before he could get accustomed to their ways of living. Their food consisted chiefly of meat and Indian corn ; they also used honey and sugar a good deal, but had very little salt. Jonathan had been brought up in the older settlements, where his small stomach had grown used to bread and other luxuries almost unknown in the forest. It had probably been a pious, orderly family, too, since all the brothers bore names out of the Bible, after the Puritan fashion. What a change !

But the spirits of boyhood are blessedly elastic, and soon Jonathan did not fail to recover some share of cheerfulness, and to enjoy the pleasures of his age. By and by we hear of him going out to bathe in the river with the Indian boys, and of his being nearly drowned ; and of the other boys, when they had brought him to, giving him a silver buckle ‘not to tell the old folk.’ The ways of boys are not so much unlike all the world over.

Ah ! it was the older prisoners who were more to be pitied. They could not so readily learn to forget the past, or take kindly to the ways of those who had made their lives so different. When Jonathan had lived among the Indians about a year, he fell in with a Mrs. Martin, who had been taken prisoner at the same time as himself. Very touching is his simple account of their meeting :—‘ When she saw me, she came smiling, and asked me if it was me. I told her it was. She asked me how I had been. I told her I had been very unwell, for I had had the fever and ague for a long time. So she took me off to a log, and there we sat down ; and she combed my head, and asked me a great many questions about how I lived, and if I didn’t want to see my mother and little brothers. I told her that I should be glad to see them, but never expected to, again. She then pulled out some pieces of her daughter’s scalp, that, she said, were some trimmings they had trimmed off the night after she was killed, and that she meant to keep them as long as she lived. She then talked and cried about her family, that was all destroyed and gone, *except the remaining bits of her daughter’s scalp*. We stayed here a considerable time, and meanwhile took many a cry together ; and when we parted again, took our last and final farewell, for I never saw her again.’

It was three or four years before young Alder got acclimatized, and ceased to be troubled by severe attacks of fever and ague. By this time he had learned the language, which went a long way towards reconciling him to his lot. He no longer fell asleep when, in the autumn, the Indians would gather round the fire to tell their exciting stories of exploits in hunting and war. And his content was complete when he grew of an age to have an old musket placed in his hands, and be sent out into the woods to bring back game, and be praised for his skill by the elders. While he was still a boy, the tribe

were attacked more than once by the settlers ; and when he became a warrior himself, he seems to have had no scruple about joining his adopted people in raids upon his own fellow-countrymen. He had almost forgotten his old home now, and was quite an Indian, to whom the taking of scalps and the stealing of horses appeared to be no small part of the whole duty of man.

In the course of time there was peace along the frontier, and peace meant the white settlers coming farther and farther into the Indian country. When they reached the neighbourhood in which Alder was living, he had been fifteen years among the Indians, had married a squaw, and had almost entirely forgotten his own language. But he now drew towards his own people, and learned English from them again. He took to farming after their fashion, and began to be a prosperous man of business, hiring labourers, and selling produce both to the whites and to the Indians. Still, however, he does not seem to have thought much of returning to his own home, till the bad temper of his wife set him on seeking a change.

But how was he to find his family? He could not even remember the name of the State in which they lived, and a State in America is as wide a word as a country in Europe. One day, as he was talking to a man named Moore, who took an interest in restoring him to his friends, he recollected that his mother's house had been near a place called Greenbriar, that there was a lead mine close by, and that one of the neighbours was named Gulion. Moore had once known a family of that name, and it turned out that this was the very one. But when Moore made inquiries at Alder's old home, he heard that his family had removed some time before, and nobody knew where. These early settlers were almost as great wanderers as the Indians themselves, and, of course, had not enough correspondence to make it worth while for them

to leave their address at the post office—if there had been many post offices in the backwoods.

Disappointed for his friend's sake, Moore did all he could by putting up notices in various parts of the country, stating that Jonathan Alder was still alive, and where he was to be found. He himself had almost given up hopes of seeing his family, supposing they must be all dead, when one day, happening to visit the nearest town, he was told that there was a letter for him in the post office, probably the first letter he had ever had in his life. It was from his brother Paul, who, falling in with one of Moore's notices, wrote at once to say that his mother and brothers were still alive.

At this news Alder resolved to go to Virginia and live with them. Getting rid of his wife by the simple process of letting her keep all his property, which would make her a great woman among her own people, he started in company with his friend Moore, who was to act as a guide to him in the strange ways of civilised life. They travelled on horseback, and arrived at his mother's house on the Sunday after the New Year. Pretending to be entire strangers, they stopped at the door, and asked to have their horses fed. They were received with the hearty hospitality shown to all wayfarers, and Jonathan found himself, with what emotions may be imagined, in the same room with those so near and once so dear to him. He could not recollect their features, as he had hoped to do before making himself known. But they could not long remain strangers.

'I had always thought I should have recognised my mother by a mole on her face. In the corner sat an old lady, who, I supposed, was her, although I could not tell, for when I was taken by the Indians her head was as black as a crow, and now it was almost perfectly white. Two young women were present, who eyed me very close, and I heard one of them

whisper to the other, "He looks very much like Mark" (my brother). I saw they were about to discover me, and accordingly turned my chair round to my brother, and said, "You say your name is Alder?" "Yes," he replied; "my name is Paul Alder." "Well," I rejoined, "my name is Alder too." Now it is hardly necessary to describe our feelings at that time, but they were very different from those I had when I was taken prisoner, and saw the Indian coming with my brother's scalp in his hands, shaking off the blood.

'When I told my brother that my name was Alder, he rose to shake hands with me, so overjoyed that he could scarcely utter a word, and my old mother ran, threw her arms around me, while tears ran down her cheeks. The first words she spoke after she grasped me in her arms were, "How you have grown!" Then she told me of a dream she had had. Says she, "I dreamed that you had come to see me, and that you was a little *onorary* (mean) looking fellow, and I would not own you for my son; but now I find I was mistaken, and I am proud to own you for my son." I told her I could remind her of a few circumstances that she would recollect, that took place before I was made captive. I then related various things, among which was, that the negroes on passing our house on Saturday evening, to spend Sundays with their wives, would beg pumpkins of her, to get her to roast them for them against their return on Monday morning. She recollected these circumstances, and said she had now no doubt of my being her son.'

After coming back to his people, Alder lived to a good old age, and so far made up for lost time in the matter of literary education as to be author of one of those narratives of returned captives which have shown us, more than any other writings, behind the scenes of Indian life. His story is here taken from Howe's *Historical Collections of Ohio*.

It is one of the strangest features of Indian captivity, that those prisoners, torn so roughly from home and friends, after a few years might come to be so content that they did not care to return when they had the opportunity, sometimes even could not be forced to abandon the tribe among whom they had been adopted. And this story is not only to be told of children, too young at the time of their capture to remember where their parents lived, but of many grown-up men and women, who in the end forgot their old affections, to cling more strongly to the new relations entered upon at first with such reluctance; in the case of active and vigorous young fellows, this was probably the rule rather than the exception. While the Indian, even when taken young and educated, however carefully and kindly, in the ways of civilisation, sooner or later almost always broke away from them as from a prison, the white people, both French and English, who had once tasted of the wild freedom of the wilderness, seldom lost the love of such a life, and often by their own choice remained among the Indians to the end of their days.

After the war of Pontiac, when the western tribes were crushed by Colonel Bouquet's expedition into their country, it was made one of the conditions of peace that all white prisoners in their hands should be brought into the camp. The Indians faithfully performed their bargain, but it was no easy task. Some of the prisoners had to be bound before they could be carried to the spot where their former husbands and kinsmen were eagerly waiting to reclaim them. Many, at the moment of surrender, had to be torn from the arms of their red-skinned friends, and could scarcely be persuaded to accompany the white men. They mourned over this parting as bitterly as over the former one, lamenting for days, and even refusing to take food. And there were some who, on the homeward march, found means to escape and return once more

to the Indian wigwams which for years they had looked on as their home.

Such is the testimony of eye-witnesses, who have described the scene of surrender as one to move even the hardy Highlanders and the rough backwoodsmen who formed the little army. Hundreds of the captives were gathered in from the forests and brought back alive. But who knew that his dear ones had not been dead for years?

'There were to be seen fathers and mothers recognising and clasping their once-lost babes, husbands hanging round the necks of their newly-recovered wives, sisters and brothers unexpectedly meeting together after a long separation, scarcely able to speak the same language, or for some time to be sure that they were the children of the same parents. In all these interviews joy and rapture inexpressible were seen, while feelings of a very different nature were painted in the looks of others, flying from place to place in eager inquiries after relatives not found, trembling to receive an answer to questions, distracted with doubts, hopes, and fears on obtaining no account of those they sought for, or stiffened into living monuments of horror and woe on learning their unhappy fate.'

The Indian warriors, in their stoical manner, were no less affected, while the squaws abandoned themselves to tears and howls. After most unwillingly delivering up their captives, they hung about the camp, paying them constant visits, bringing them valuable presents, and showing them every mark of tenderness. And when the army set out on its homeward march, 'some of the Indians solicited and obtained permission to accompany their former captives to Fort Pitt, and employed themselves in hunting and bringing provisions for them on the way. A young Mingo carried this still further, and gave an instance of love which would make a figure even in romance. A young woman of Virginia was among the captives, to whom

he had formed so strong an attachment as to call her his wife. Against all the remonstrances of the imminent danger to which he exposed himself by approaching the frontier, he persisted in following her, at the risk of being killed by the surviving relatives of many unfortunate persons who had been taken captive or scalped by those of his nation.'

Similar scenes at the same time took place at Albany, the rendezvous for prisoners taken by the northern tribes.

As Bouquet's army, with its long train of followers, entered the settlements, it was met by women and others who had not been able to accompany the expedition, but were none the less anxious for tidings of lost friends. The scenes of joy and bitter disappointment were now daily renewed, and one by one the restored captives were claimed and taken home. Among the rest of the inquirers was an old woman who had lost her little girl several years before. Searching eagerly among the crowd, she found one whose features seemed to be those of her child, changed by years of Indian life; but the young savage did not understand a word that was said to her, and would not recognise her mother. The poor woman was in pitiable affliction at being thus forgotten by her own child. It was Colonel Bouquet himself who suggested that she should sing the hymn with which she had often rocked her darling to sleep long years ago :

'Alone, yet not alone am I,
Though in this solitude so drear.'

At the long forgotten yet once so familiar sound, the child's stubborn, sunburnt countenance was stirred. She remembered—she understood—and with a burst of tears she fell into her old mother's arms.

Another of the captives thus rescued by Bouquet against their will, was the boy John M'Cullough, whom we have seen so unwilling to be baptized into Indian life. His father had

already bought him back from the Indians, but three or four years had worked such a change that when Mr. McCullough came to fetch his son out of bondage, he found him shy and suspicious, and could only speak with him through an interpreter. When informed that he was to go back to his old home, he burst into tears. They put him on a horse; he threw himself off. Then they had to tie him on the horse, and started for the settlements. His grief was still so apparent, that at the first halting-place the father thought well to bind this unfilial son's arms behind his back with his garters. But he contrived to work his arms loose, cunningly keeping them as if still tied, till he saw a chance of making a run for it while his father was making up the fire. The father and another white man chased him with a dog, as if he had been a wild beast, but the obstinate little savage had the art to hide himself in a tree, and next day stole back to his Indian friends, who were much pleased to see him again, especially as they had secured the ransom paid by his father.

Some of these voluntary or involuntary renegades gained an evil notoriety by barbarous conduct which seemed to outdo that of the Indians themselves. But when white prisoners, after spending some time in this friendly captivity, did return to their own people, their acquaintance with Indian ways made them most valuable recruits. Such men served as scouts or guides to the English or American forces, and were sure at least to fight desperately; for if they again fell into the hands of their red masters, they had little mercy to look for.

These scouts, when on the look-out for the enemy, were accustomed to range the woods in Indian dress, and of course it was all the better for them to be able to pass for Indians in all respects. Sometimes, indeed, their disguise was all too complete, causing them to be shot at in mistake by some hasty

or nervous comrade. And their connection with both parties brought them occasionally into peculiar and painful situations, in which a man might fall by the hand that he had once least expected to be raised against him. One of the most remarkable of the incidents turning upon these complicated relationships, is narrated by Colonel M'Donaid in his biographical sketches of some of his old comrades in the border wars :—

Henry and Christopher Miller were two brothers who had been taken prisoners in youth by the Indians. After growing up to manhood, the elder brother resolved to run away for Kentucky, and carried out his purpose ; but Christopher chose to remain. He then cast in his lot with the Indians, while Henry entered the service of his own countrymen, and acquired no small distinction as a scout in General Wayne's campaign of 1794.

Henry Miller, with three or four of his comrades, all mounted on good horses, had been sent out by their commander with orders to try and take an Indian prisoner, from whom information might be obtained as to the doings of the enemy. Accordingly, they stole through the Indian country without coming across any of the redskins, till one day they 'discovered a smoke, dismounted, tied their horses, and cautiously reconnoitred. They found three Indians encamped on a high piece of ground, clear of brush or any undergrowth, rendering it difficult to approach them without being discovered. While reconnoitring, they saw not very distant from the camp a fallen tree. They returned and went round, so as to get it between them and the Indians. The tree-top being full of leaves, would serve to screen them from observation. They crept forward on their hands and knees with the caution of the cat until they reached it, when they were within seventy or eighty yards of the camp. The Indians were sitting or standing round about the fire, roasting their venison, laughing and

making merry antics, little dreaming that death was stealing a march upon them.

'Arrived at the fallen tree, their plans were settled. McClellan, who was almost as swift of foot as a deer, was to catch the centre Indian, while Wells and Miller were to kill the other two, one shooting to the right and the other to the left. Resting the muzzles of their rifles on a log of the fallen tree, they aimed for the Indians' hearts. Whiz went the balls, and both Indians fell. Before the smoke had risen two feet, McClellan was running with uplifted tomahawk for the remaining Indian, who bounded down the river; but finding himself likely to be headed if he continued in that direction, he turned and made for the river, which at that place had a bluff bank about twenty feet high. On reaching it he sprang off into the stream, and sank to his middle in the soft mud at its bottom. McClellan came after, and instantly sprang upon him as he was wallowing and endeavouring to extricate himself from the mire. The Indian drew his knife; the other raised his tomahawk, and bade him throw down his knife or he would kill him instantly. He did so, and surrendered without further opposition.

'By this time Wells and his companion came to the bank, and discovered the two quietly sticking in the mud. Their prisoner being secure, they selected a place where the bank was less precipitous, went down, dragged the captive out, and tied him. He was sulky, and refused to speak either Indian or English. Some of the party went back for their horses, while the others washed the mud and paint from the prisoner. When cleaned, he turned out to be a white man, but still refused to speak or give any account of himself.

'The party scalped the two Indians whom they had shot, and then set off for headquarters. Henry Miller having some suspicions that their prisoner might possibly be his

brother Christopher, whom he had left with the Indians years previous, rode up alongside of him and called him by his Indian name. At the sound he started, stared around, and eagerly inquired how he came to know his name. The mystery was soon explained. Their prisoner was indeed Christopher Miller!¹

Thus the brothers met again, one of them having narrowly escaped being shot by the other. The story goes on to tell how Christopher seemed by no means pleased to find himself among his own people again. Urged to join the whites as his brother had done, he remained sullen and stubborn for some time; but when at last he did consent to enlist, he showed that he could fight as heartily as any of them against his late associates.

As a conclusion to this long chapter, and an example of how these men, who in a manner belonged to both races, were not always to be trusted in fighting against their former friends, let us take one of the best stories from Dr. McLung's *Sketches of Western Adventure*, which is perhaps the most popular and well-written collection of the chronicles of the backwoods:—

‘One morning about sunrise a young man of wild and savage appearance suddenly arose from a cluster of bushes in front of a cabin, and hailed the house in a barbarous dialect, which seemed neither exactly Indian nor English, but a collection of shreds and patches from which the graces of both were carefully excluded. His skin had evidently once been white, although now grievously tanned by constant exposure to the weather. His dress in every respect was that of an Indian, as were his gestures, tones, and equipments, and his age could

¹ He seems to have been a mere youth when his brother deserted the Indians, which might account for their not recognising each other merely readily.

not be supposed to exceed twenty years. He talked volubly but uncouthly, placed his hand upon his breast, gestured vehemently, and seemed very earnestly bent upon communicating something. He was invited into the cabin, and the neighbours quickly collected round him.

‘He appeared involuntarily to shrink from contact with them; his eyes rolled rapidly around with a distrustful expression from one to the other, and his whole manner was that of a wild animal just caught, and shrinking from the touch of its captors. As several present understood the Indian tongue, they at length gathered the following circumstances as accurately as they could be translated out of a language which seemed to be an *omnium gatherum* of all that was mongrel, uncouth, and barbarous. He said that he had been taken by the Indians when a child, but could neither recollect his name nor the country of his birth; that he had been adopted by an Indian warrior, who brought him up with his other sons without making the slightest difference between them, and that under his father’s roof he had lived happily until the last month.

‘A few weeks before that time, his father, accompanied by himself and a younger brother, had hunted for some time upon the waters of the Miami, about forty miles from the spot where Cincinnati now stands; and after all their meat, skins, etc., had been properly secured, the old man determined to gratify his children by taking them upon a war expedition to Kentucky. They accordingly built a bark canoe, in which they crossed the Ohio near the mouth of Licking; and having buried it, so as to secure it from the action of the sun, they advanced into the country, and encamped at the distance of fifteen miles from the river. Here their father was alarmed by hearing an owl cry in a peculiar tone, which he declared boded death or captivity to themselves if they continued their

expedition, and announced his intention of returning without delay to the river.

‘Both his sons vehemently opposed this resolution, and at length prevailed upon the old man to disregard the owl’s warning, and conduct them, as he had promised, against the frontiers of Kentucky. The party then composed themselves to sleep, but were quickly awakened by their father, who had again been warned in a dream that death awaited them in Kentucky, and again besought his children to release him from his promise and lose no time in returning home. Again they prevailed upon him to disregard the warning and persevere in the march. He consented to gratify them, but declared that he would not remain a moment longer in the camp which they now occupied ; and, accordingly, they left it immediately, and marched on through the night, directing their course toward Bourbon county.

‘In the evening they approached a house—that which he had hailed and in which he was now speaking. Suddenly the desire of rejoining his people occupied his mind so strongly as to exclude every other idea ; and, seizing the first favourable opportunity, he had concealed himself in the bushes, and neglected to reply to all the signals which had been concerted for the purpose of collecting their party when scattered.

‘This account appeared so extraordinary, and the young man’s appearance was so wild and suspicious, that many of the neighbours suspected him of treachery, and thought he should be arrested as a spy. Others opposed this resolution, and gave full credit to his narrative. In order to satisfy themselves, however, they insisted upon his instantly conducting them to the spot where the canoe had been buried. To this the young man objected most vehemently, declaring that although he had deserted his father and brother, yet he would not betray them.

‘These feelings were too delicate to meet with much sympathy from the rude borderers who surrounded him, and he was given to understand that nothing short of conducting them to the point of embarkation would be accepted as an evidence of his sincerity. With obvious reluctance he at length complied. From twenty to thirty men were quickly assembled; mounted upon good horses, and under the guidance of the deserter, they moved rapidly towards the mouth of the Licking. On the road, the young man informed them that he would first conduct them to the spot where they had encamped when the scream of the owl alarmed his father, and where an iron kettle had been left, concealed in a hollow tree. He was probably induced to do this from the hope of delaying the pursuit so long as to afford his friends an opportunity of crossing the river in safety.

‘But if such was his intention, no measure could have been more unfortunate. The whites approached the encampment in deep silence, and quickly perceived two Indians—an old man and a boy—seated by the fire, and busily employed in cooking some venison. The deserter became much agitated at the sight of them, and so earnestly implored his countrymen not to kill them, that it was agreed to surround the encampment and endeavour to secure them as prisoners. This was accordingly attempted; but so desperate was the resistance of the Indians, and so determined were their efforts to escape, that the whites were compelled to fire upon them, and the old man fell mortally wounded, while the boy, by an incredible display of address and activity, was enabled to escape. The deserter beheld his father fall, and throwing himself from his horse, he ran up to the spot where the old man lay, bleeding but still insensible, and falling upon his body, besought his forgiveness for being the unwilling cause of his death, and wept bitterly.

‘His father evidently recognised him, and gave him his hand,

but almost instantly afterward expired. The white men now called upon him to conduct them at a gallop to the spot where the canoe was buried, expecting to reach it before the Indian boy and intercept him. The deserter in vain implored them to compassionate his feelings. He urged that he had already sufficiently demonstrated the truth of his former assertions, at the expense of his father's life, and earnestly entreated them to permit his younger brother to escape. His companions, however, were inexorable. Nothing but the blood of the young Indian would satisfy them, and the deserter was again compelled to act as guide. Within two hours they reached the designated spot. The canoe was still there, but no track could be seen upon the sand, so that it was evident that their victim had not yet arrived.

'Hastily dismounting, they tied their horses and concealed themselves within close rifle-shot of the canoe. Within ten minutes after their arrival, the Indian appeared in sight, walking swiftly toward them. He went straight to the spot where the canoe had been buried, and was in the act of digging it up when he received a dozen balls through his body, and leaping high into the air, fell dead upon the sand. He was instantly scalped and buried where he fell, without having seen his brother, and probably without having known the treachery by which he and his father had lost their lives. The deserter remained but a short time in Bourbon, and never regained his tranquillity of mind. He shortly afterward disappeared, but whether to seek his relations in Virginia or Pennsylvania, or whether, disgusted by the ferocity of the whites, he returned to the Indians, has never yet been known. He was never heard of afterward.'

CHAPTER VI.

KENTON AMONG THE INDIANS.



THE name of Simon Kenton holds a high place among the heroes of the backwoods; and the story especially of his captivity among the Indians is unsurpassed for thrilling interest. He was born in 1755, and, thanks to an Irish father, a Scotch mother, and a Virginia 'raising,' in sixteen years he had grown into a strapping hearty fellow, friendly and honest,—as

honesty went on the border,—with the not uncommon fault of a hot temper, and able to do a day's work with the best of the neighbours. He might now have passed all his life in the uneventful drudgery of a farm, if it had not been for the cause that has set many another good fellow a-roving—a woman, to wit.

At the age of sixteen he fell head over heels in love. But, as will happen in such cases, there was *another*, and both the swains could not be the favoured one. Kenton's rival, a

farmer called Veach, not only carried off the sweetheart, but on the wedding day proved the warmth of his affection by taking the disappointed suitor and soundly thrashing him for a forward hobbledehoy.

Young Simon's bruises were soon healed, but wrath continued to rankle in his heart; he meditated revenge, and practised himself in the arts of rustic combat. At last, one day, his chance came. Falling in with Veach alone, he hotly challenged him to fight there and then. The successful rival was an older man, and even a bit of a fine gentleman for that part of the world, since it seems that he wore his hair in a *queue*, according to the fashion of the time. He had half forgotten the quarrel with this youth—indeed, a thrashing was not thought much of in the backwoods; so now, with a sense of good-natured superiority, he would rather have shaken hands and said nothing more about it. But Kenton was not to be appeased, and in this rough life it was as disgraceful to hold back from a fight as for a gentleman in these days to decline a duel. Forthwith they sought out a suitable spot, stripped off their coats, and set to. What we call fair play in boxing was held an unnecessary refinement by the Virginians, who made no scruple of disabling the enemy by wrestling, kicking, and even biting, as opportunity served. Before long the rivals were struggling on the ground, young Kenton getting the worst of it, when he somehow managed to fasten Veach's *queue* round a bush. Having thus rendered him helpless, he fell to beating and kicking the poor man till he lay still as a corpse, and the blood came out of his mouth.

At this sight Kenton's fit of ungovernable fury gave way to horror. He fancied that he had killed his rival outright. Fear and remorse drove him from the spot; he fled, without going home, expecting every hour to have the hue and cry raised after him. Pursued by a vision of the gallows, he

hurried over the then unknown wilds of the Alleghanies, and came down into the rich plains of Kentucky, where a few adventurous pioneers were just beginning to push their way among those vast hunting-grounds in which the sound of the axe had never been heard. In these men he found congenial spirits. He took the name of Butler for concealment, and under this name soon became well known on the frontiers as one of the most daring hunters and scouts who led the vanguard of civilisation. It was many years before he learned that his conscience might be clear of the crime which had thus exiled him. Veach was not dead, though not far from it. He lived to welcome his old enemy home again, and to shake hands with him after all; and Kenton lived to repent the sins of his youth far more sincerely than from the fear of punishment.

For the next seven years there are many adventures to be related of him, but we will pass on to the incidents of his captivity. When he was about twenty-three years old, Simon 'Butler,' with two of his comrades, for want of something else to do, set off upon an expedition, the object of which was to steal horses from the hostile Indians, an exploit counted nothing but honourable by both races. Cautiously proceeding through the Indian country, they came unseen to Chillicothe, a chief town of the Shawnees. Here, by night, they fell in with a drove of horses, and tempting them with salt, and slipping halters over their heads, they caught seven, with which they made off as fast as they could ride for the Ohio.

When they reached the river it was growing dark; the wind was blowing a hurricane, and the waves ran so roughly that the frightened horses could not be made to take the water. This delay might prove a serious matter for the hitherto successful thieves. They went back some way and

lay in ambush, watching their trail, to see if they were pursued by the Indians, while the horses were hobbled and turned loose. Next day, when the wind fell, they caught the horses and again tried to cross the river; but these animals still recoiled from the water which had given them such a fright. As their real owners might now be expected to come up at any moment, Kenton and his companions resolved to pick out the three best horses, and, abandoning the others, to push along the bank for a post of their countrymen where they might hope to be safe. But just as they were about to start, covetousness tempted them to their undoing by suggesting that it was a pity to leave so many fine steeds. Why not try to take all seven? The three men separated to recapture the horses which they had turned loose, and which had already straggled out of sight; and as they were thus occupied, a whoop told them that their pursuers were at hand. This was what their own folly had brought upon them.

Kenton suddenly came upon a party of the Indians on horseback. Seeing that he could not escape, he tried to shoot the first of them, but his powder, wetted in the attempt to cross the river, flashed in the pan. All he could do was to run away; and he did. The Indians galloped after him; but he had the good luck to get into a 'wind-row,' a strip of ground on which a storm had hurled down the trunks in wild confusion, and here their horses were of little service to them. They rode round, however, to intercept him at the other side, and on emerging from the wind-row he was confronted by a warrior with uplifted tomahawk. Kenton clubbed his gun to defend himself, but another Indian had slipped up unperceived, and now seized his arms from behind; others immediately falling upon him, pinioned him with strips of hide. A shot or two were heard not far off, and presently some more of the Indians came up, shaking at him the scalp of one of

his companions. The other had been able to make his escape.

Having thus got Kenton into their hands, the Indians soon let him know what they thought of him, and gave him a foretaste of what was to come. They beat him soundly with their ramrods, mockingly asking if he was going to steal any more horses. Of course, the prisoner had well known what he was to expect if caught, and must take, as kindly as possible, all the blows and abuse they chose to give him. And his captors were not disposed to be behindhand in impressing him with a sense of his error. On their way home, they devised for him a punishment which seemed to them peculiarly humorous and appropriate. They tied him on one of the wildest of the horses, which it took several men to hold while the prisoner was being lashed to its back. To tantalize him, they left his hands free, but covered them with moccasins, that he might not be well able to defend his face from being switched and torn in the thickets on his Mazeppa-like career. Then they turned the excited horse loose, and roared with laughter to see it kicking and plunging through the woods in the vain effort to shake off its burden. At night they secured the poor fellow with unusually harsh precautions. He was laid on his back, and his feet tied to two saplings; then his arms were stretched out and lashed to a pole laid across his chest, while a rope round his neck was pulled back just tight enough not quite to choke him.

Three nights he passed in this painful plight; and when the Indians arrived near Chillicothe, they tied him up to a stake, and he thought they were going to burn him. But they had no mind to squander so soon the treat which they expected from his tortures. The whole population of the town came out to sing and dance round their victim, varying their amusement every now and then by taking a turn at kicking or cuffing

him, till, after three hours of this sport, they had tired themselves out, and left him for the rest of the night to be tormented by the gnats and mosquitoes.

In the morning he was led out to run the gauntlet. The Indians had gathered from all the neighbourhood to assist at the rare diversion which they anticipated from such an enemy. Two or three hundred in number, each armed with a stout hickory stick, they ranged themselves in two lines, stretching for nearly a quarter of a mile, through which the prisoner must pass, half naked, and exhausted as he was by pain, fatigue, and want of sleep. Poor Kenton had only one friend in all that assemblage. This was an old negro, most likely a run-away slave, who told him that if he could break through the lines, and reach the council-house in the town, he would be counted 'out of play,' so to speak, and could not again be forced to undergo the ordeal, for there were certain rules respected even in Indian cruelty.

So long as it was only sticks he had to do with, he thought it not worth while to take this desperate course; but when, as he was being goaded on through the ranks, his quick eye saw a fellow waiting with a knife ready to plunge into him, it seemed time to make a dash for his life. He darted through the lines, got clear away, and bounded off towards the council-house, with the whole crowd yelling at his heels like a pack of baffled hounds.

Now came an exciting race. Kenton had reached the town, and almost gained the sanctuary of the council-house, when he met an Indian, who had probably stayed behind to adorn himself suitably for such a festive occasion, and now, with a blanket gracefully draped round him, was stalking at his leisure towards the scene of punishment, not knowing that he was late for the fun. In an instant, seeing the state of the case, he threw off at once his dignity and his blanket, and

made a rush to intercept the breathless fugitive. As the Indian was fresh, he had no difficulty in doing this. Kenton was borne down to the ground, and in another moment the rest of the tribe were upon him in full fury, beating, kicking, and tearing off his clothes till they had almost killed him.

Half a century afterwards, when Kenton's hair had grown grey, he was travelling in this part of the country, and passed the place where he had run the gauntlet so many years ago. To a friend who was with him he pointed out the very path along which his painful race had been. And when his friend expressed surprise at his recognising the spot, the face of the country having been so much changed in the long interval, 'Ah!' he replied, 'I had a good many reasons laid on my back to recollect it.'

We now return to the unfortunate youth at a time when he had little reason to think that he would live as many hours as he had still years before him. When he had lain for some time in an exhausted state, his persecutors revived him with food and water, and brought him to the council-house, where his fate was to be determined. The warriors sat round in a circle, an old chief in the centre acting as foreman of the savage jury. The proceedings, although the conclusion was almost a foregone one, were conducted with the usual deliberation, which must have been felt a tedious mockery by the prisoner. Several speeches were made. Kenton did not understand the language, but the looks and gestures, both of orators and audience, told him only too plainly the tenor of what was being said. The few who seemed to be for mercy had little attention, while the other speeches were received with expressive grunts of approbation. For taking the votes a war-club was handed round. Those who voted for death struck it violently on the ground, those who were for mercy passed it on; and the old chief made a notch on a piece of wood to

record each opinion. With his own eyes Kenton saw that he was condemned by a majority ; and if he had still been in any doubt, the shouts of joy with which the verdict was hailed were a dismal translation of his sentence. Then they passed on to discuss the time and place of his execution. Some were for putting him to death at once, but the majority thought better to make it a solemn national event, and to get as great a treat in the way of torment out of him as his lacerated body could afford. With this prospect before him, he was remanded for the present to close confinement.

Next day the prisoner was carried off towards the place appointed for his burning. On the way he passed through two towns of the tribe, at each of which he had again to run the gauntlet, and underwent a severe whipping.

At the second of these towns he made a bold effort to escape. Not thinking him in a state for such an undertaking, the Indians had not tied him up as before, and kept a careless guard. He watched his opportunity to dash off, and, hurt as he was, was able to distance his pursuers. What must have been his feelings at once more finding himself free ! But, alas ! he had only got two miles from the town, when he accidentally ran across a party of Indians on horseback. They pursued and easily recaptured him, for this was the open region of the Sandusky Plains, where the dense forests which covered the other side of the Ohio began to give place to the prairies of the West. Now, as he was being driven back to the town, he gave himself up to sullen despair. Fate was against him, and there seemed nothing for it but to die.

Very different were the feelings of the Indians as they trooped out to give harsh welcome to the recaptured prisoner. Amid general rejoicing, he was bound, and handed over to the frolicsome youth of the tribe, who amused themselves by tumbling him into a creek, and rolling him in the mud till he

was nearly suffocated. It would have been mercy to drown him outright, but this they had no intention of doing, and moved on to the place where he was to suffer a more dreadful death.

Here he was painted black, the usual token of his doom, and the Indians flocked to look upon him with as much interest as if he had been some strange monster. Among the rest came Simon Girty, formerly a companion of his own in border exploits, now a renegade, almost naturalized among the Indians, and playing a disgracefully prominent part in their attacks on his own people. In frontier history this notorious character is branded with the most hateful charges of crime and cruelty, but for once there is some good to be told of him.

Not recognising Kenton, disfigured as he was by paint and marks of ill-usage, Girty asked him where he came from. The name of Kentucky moved no chord in the traitor's breast. He inquired how many men the Americans had there. Kenton cunningly told him the number of officers, to mislead him as to their real force; for it appears that even in these early days there was some reason for the joke about our Transatlantic cousins boasting more captains and colonels than there were privates to give command over. Then he was asked his name, and when he replied 'Simon Butler,' the renegade started. Now he remembered his old comrade, and showed sorrow to find him in such woeful case. He is declared to have embraced him with tears, promising to leave nothing untried to save his life. Accordingly he had another council called, and made a long speech to the Indians in their own language, pleading for his friend, who was delighted to see his words received with evident approbation. When Colonel Crawford was about to be burned, Girty either could not or would not save him; but now his influence prevailed with his savage associates. Kenton was set free, after going so near death with so little hope of a respite.

Girty's kindness did not end here. He fitted out his countryman with a suit of clothes and a horse, and took him about among the Indians till he began to feel quite at home. Kenton soon recovered from his injuries, and did not bear much malice towards his late persecutors. Seeing that he looked on himself as outlawed for ever from his own people, it is possible that he might even have followed Girty's example in casting in his lot with the Indians for the rest of his life, in which case he could hardly but have degenerated into a treacherous scoundrel of the same type. But there was another turn, and yet another, for him in the wheel of fortune.

When he had been for some time among the Indians, Kenton and Girty were summoned to a council. To his dismay, the former observed that while the warriors gave Girty their hand, they refused to take his, and received him with looks that boded no good. A chief rose and made an excited speech, of which he was too evidently the subject. Then the truth came out. A party of the tribe had just been defeated with loss by the whites. According to their barbarous code of honour, it was necessary to take revenge, and Kenton was the only victim in their hands. Once more he was on his trial for life. It was in vain that Girty now did his best to appease the scowling crowd, reminded them of the services he had done to their cause, and begged that his friend's life might be spared for his sake, and he would never again interpose in favour of an American. By a large majority Kenton was once more condemned to die, and his old comrade was obliged to tell him that this time there was no remedy. Again he found himself a most forlorn prisoner, with life not worth many hours' purchase.

Yet Girty was not at the end of his devices. He put it into the heads of the Indians to take their captive to Upper Sandusky, thus securing a delay at least in his execution.

This place was, during the revolutionary war, the rendezvous of the tribes acting in the British interest. A great gathering of Indians was about to be held there, to receive the presents of clothes, arms, trinkets, and so forth with which they were kept in pay, and it was easy to persuade his judges that Kenton could be burned with more *éclat* at this assemblage. So to Sandusky he was sent under a guard. By this time his feelings must have become somewhat blunted by all these strange and varied chances. For weeks 'fortune had been playing at cat and mouse with him ;' and if he had learned that his life was never safe for a day, he had also found reason never to give up hope. It is said in one account of his life that he ran the gauntlet eight times, was three times bound to the stake to be burned, and came before four councils to decide on his death.

On his way he now met the celebrated chief Logan, illustrious no less for his magnanimity than for his prowess. It was not Logan's nature to delight in cruelty. He shook hands with the prisoner, and, without promising anything, undertook to do what he could for him. He at once sent off a messenger on a merciful errand. So, when Kenton reached Sandusky, he was not made to run the gauntlet—a reassuring sign.

For the fourth time a council was held to pronounce upon his case. Here an unexpected advocate, engaged by Logan's good offices, appeared to speak for him. This was Captain Peter Drewyer, a French Canadian by birth, and one of the principal Indian agents and interpreters in the British service—a post which made him a man of importance among the allied tribes. He began his speech by flattering the passions of his audience, declaring that not a single American ought to be left alive. But, he said,—and his hearers were sure to agree with him,—war must be carried on by means of cunning as well as

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courage. Now, it was most desirable that this prisoner should be examined by the British general at Detroit, who might get from him important information about the enemy. Afterwards he might be brought back, and put to death in any way they pleased. This argument seemed highly reasonable, and the Indians were entirely convinced when Drewyer offered them a hundred dollars' worth of rum and tobacco for leave to take Kenton to Detroit. Having gone so far in the bargain, they were then persuaded, for an additional ransom, to give up all their claims on his life. The savages loved rum even better than revenge.

Having been taken in a canoe to the British garrison at Detroit, Kenton found himself treated like a regular prisoner of war—a situation which must have seemed quite luxurious to him after his recent experiences, though our soldiers were not always disposed to be over-kindly to their fellow-countrymen of the colonies, who were then making such a bold fight for their liberties. He was even allowed to go about freely, obliged only to report himself every morning to an officer and warned not to leave the town lest he should again fall into the hands of the Indians. Rations and clothes were given him, and he made friends not among his fellow-prisoners alone, but among the inhabitants of the place, some of whom had more sympathy for his case than they cared openly to avow. But nothing could keep his heart from turning ever towards home. As soon as his strength and spirits were restored, he began to think of once more braving all the perils of hundreds of miles of prairie and forest, swarming though they might be with cruel enemies, from whose hands he would not get lightly off if a third time made prisoner.

Along with two Kentuckians he formed a plan to escape. As it was a woman who had driven him from home, so now it was a woman who aided him to return. The wife of an Indian

trader took pity on the captives, and did what she could to provide them with means for their flight. From time to time they were able to hide away a little store of food and ammunition in a hollow tree. But it would be madness to start on such a journey without guns, and guns are not to be had by prisoners for the asking. These at length their lady friend procured from some drunken Indians, and placed them in a patch of peas in her garden. Fetching them by night, the three bold fugitives started off. A Scotch trader, as cautious as he was shrewd, had dropped a hint to Kenton which was not thrown away. *If*, said he, any one should happen to want to go to Kentucky, he ought to strike out to the west, and take a circuitous route, so as to avoid the usual war-paths of the Indians. They now took this advice, travelling only by night, and steering their course by the stars.

They suffered greatly from hunger and fatigue. It was not always safe to use their guns, even when game was to be had. At one point they had almost run right into the encampment of a party of Indians. His companions, losing heart, were for going forward and surrendering themselves, but Kenton had already had enough of the tender mercies of the Indians; so they made off with all precaution, yet were so hard put to it by hunger, that when a fine buck appeared on their path, they could not resist the temptation of killing and cooking it, Indians or no Indians in sight of their tell-tale fire. But they pursued their journey without interruption, and, after a month's weary marching, arrived safe at the falls of the Ohio. Now, secure among friends, after so many sufferings and dangers, what would you expect such a man as Kenton to do? He set off, almost immediately, to court the same risks in another expedition into the Indian country.

He was still to take part in many such expeditions, and to acquire fresh fame on the frontier, not only in this war, but in

that of 1812. Though he could neither read nor write, schools having been less plentiful than scalping-knives in the neighbourhood where he was brought up, he was made a general of militia. In time he also became an earnest member of the Methodist Church, in the peaceful evening of his life settling down into the character of a more respectable citizen than might have been expected from his stormy youth. He lived to be more than eighty years of age, and when he was no longer able to hunt, the stout old Indian fighter's last days were made comfortable by a pension of twenty dollars a month.



CHAPTER VII.

STORIES OF ENDURANCE AND DARING.



THE rangers and scouts on the Indian frontier must have had as many lives as the proverbial cat. When we read the stories that are told of them, the wonder is that their hair ever grew grey, and was not hanging at some redskin's girdle almost as soon as they had reached manhood. They could not have escaped so many dangers if they had not been, for bodily strength and

endurance, a picked race. Delicate children, if any such were born to the mothers of the backwoods, must have been soon killed off by the rough nursery in which they began life. The rest grew up so tough and hardy as to take a great deal of killing, and to bear without a murmur hardship and suffering which would soon make an end of nine out of ten ordinary men.

There was a man called Thomas Mills, who lived far on

into this century, but whose youth was gone before the American colonies had separated from England. One night he was fishing in a canoe, with a torch burning in the bows. This was a common way of fishing, used by the Indians and the settlers; the light attracted the fish, and enabled the man in the canoe to spear them. But, on this occasion, the torch did more than the fisherman had bargained for. It brought on him a party of Indians, who, hiding behind the bushes, took deliberate aim, and wounded Mills in *fourteen* places. He had strength left to paddle his canoe to the shore, and one would have thought there was an end of him. But no! There was not a doctor probably within a hundred miles; yet he recovered, and lived to a good age, with the scars of fourteen bullets on him.

Many such stories could be told, none more remarkable than that of a strange pair of cripples, the name of one of whom has not been preserved. In the autumn of 1779, a party of Kentuckians, going up the Ohio, fell into an ambuscade of the Shawnees. They had been tempted to leave their boats, and follow into the woods a few Indians who showed themselves; then suddenly the Americans, some seventy strong, found hundreds of the red men whooping around them, and more than forty fell at the first volley. Their retreat being cut off, only a few succeeded in breaking through the enemy and getting away.

Among those left wounded on the ground was Captain Robert Benham, who had both his legs broken by a ball. Escaping the notice of the eager pursuers, he was able to crawl into the branches of a large fallen tree. Here he lay concealed all that day and the next. He heard the Indians moving about as they sought to strip and scalp the bodies of his unfortunate comrades. The poor man's own fate seemed scarcely more fortunate. Helpless, in agony, and without

food, he lay in continual terror of being discovered and murdered; it would not have been surprising if he had preferred death to such misery. On the evening of the second day all was quiet, and the wounded man could no longer bear the pangs of hunger. He fired at a racoon which he saw on a tree close by. It fell; but how was he to reach it in his crippled state? How could he gather materials for a fire? Able to use his arms, he was like to starve for want of legs.

But no sooner had the echo of the shot died away than he heard a cry. Fearing it to be the voice of an Indian, he was hastily reloading his gun. The cry was repeated nearer; the owner of the voice was clearly seeking him. Benham made ready to sell his life dearly. What was his relief when he recognised the sound of his own language! He called out in return, and one of his late companions appeared, in almost as bad a plight as himself.

Strange to say, this man had *both his arms broken!* The two brothers in misfortune were thus paralyzed without one another, while, by mutual help, they were able to provide for their livelihood. The one who had still the use of his legs kicked the dead body of the racoon within the other's reach, and he, in turn, using his arms, was able to light a fire and dress it, when fuel had been brought to him in the same awkward manner. Benham's hands fed his companion as well as himself, and dressed both their wounds with bandages torn from their shirts. The man with the broken legs placed his hat between the teeth of the man with the broken arms, who, wading neck-deep in the river, dipped it into the water, and brought it back full. When all the small birds and beasts within reach had been killed, the man who could walk beat the woods, and drove the game within shot of his friend. Luckily, wild turkeys and other birds abounded in the neighbourhood, and Benham was a good marksman; so, as

long as the ammunition lasted, this couple of cripples need not fear want. It was well for them that they were both hardy backwoodsmen, accustomed to endure pain and exposure almost as well as the Indians themselves.

In this extraordinary manner they made a shift to live for some weeks, and their wounds began to heal. Their prospects were still gloomy enough. Winter was drawing on. The place where they were was a solitude, shunned by the whites as the frequent lurking-place of Indian warriors, by whom the helpless invalids might expect to be found sooner than by any passing party of their own countrymen. They contrived to put up a little shed on the banks of the river, and there day after day went wearily by, while the keen blasts stripped bare the forest that seemed like to be their tomb, and they watched with anxious hope for the appearance of some boat.

At last, near the end of November, a large boat appeared, and we may guess with what eagerness the poor fellows shouted and made signs to those on board. But, to their horror and despair, the boat held over to the other bank, and the crew bent to their oars to hurry past the spot. They feared another ambush. When, however, they had gone some way down the river, their humanity got the better of their suspicions. The miserable men, who fancied themselves abandoned to their fate, saw a canoe put off from the stern of the larger craft, and paddle cautiously towards them. It was only after a long parley that their story was partly credited, and the canoe came to shore for them with all precautions against treachery.

Now their misfortunes were at an end. A pair of wretched objects,—haggard, unshaven, almost naked, and scarcely yet able to use their limbs,—they found themselves once more among friends, and had now to complain of no want of help and kindness. Both men recovered entirely from their severe

wounds, and it is known that Benham at least lived to share in many another fight with the Indians. When this part of the country became settled, he bought the spot on which he had suffered so much, where he spent the rest of his life, and died peaceably in his bed, as he could hardly have expected to do when he made his first acquaintance with the place.

Before the country was cleared, the rivers were naturally the great highways, but travelling by water was almost as perilous as by land. The early voyagers could have had little love for the beauty of those wooded banks, in every reach of which might be lurking the pitiless foe.

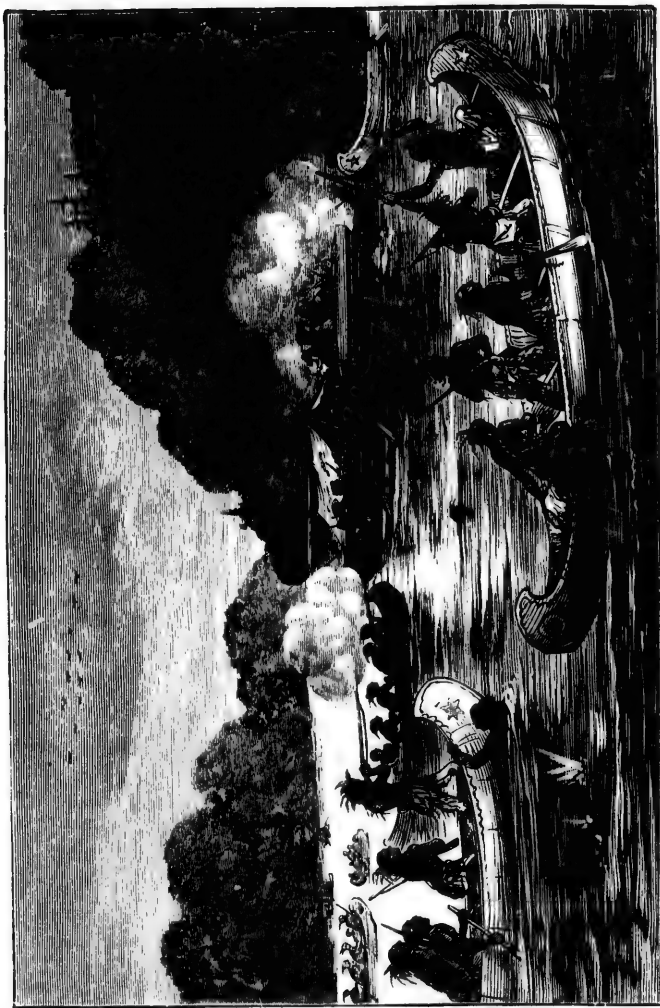
In 1781, a flat-bottomed boat was descending the Ohio, having on board nine men with their wives and children, twenty persons in all, and five horses, bound for one of the new settlements. There were rumours that the Indians had again become dangerous, so Captain Hubbell, the leader of the party, scarcely closed an eye after leaving Pittsburg. The men were divided into three watches to keep a constant lookout; all the guns stood ready loaded, and the oars were plied vigorously, the more so when signs of Indians being near had been observed, and a canoe was detected after nightfall moving down the stream as if to watch their boat.

At daybreak next morning, the crew heard themselves hailed from the banks by a plaintive voice entreating them to put into shore and take some white people on board. They were not to be deluded by this stale trick, and when they rowed away from the ambush, the voice soon changed its tone, and the next thing they heard was the sound of paddles. Through the mist which hung over the river, they could make out three large canoes, each holding twenty-five or thirty Indians, bearing down upon them. This was only what they had expected; all was ready for it. The women and children lay down among the baggage, some articles of furniture were

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BOAT FIGHT ON THE OHIO.

hastily thrown overboard to clear the decks for action, and every man took up his position. The captain's orders were not to fire till the flash of the gun could singe the enemy's eyebrows.

No doubt this order was not meant to be taken literally. Soon the three canoes were paddling round the boat, and pouring in a hot fire, to which the little party replied with deadly effect, as they drifted down the river. Captain Hubbell showed great coolness. He was just about to fire, when a bullet carried away the flint lock of his gun; he turned round, seized a brand from the fire of the caboose, and applied it to the pan of the piece. Next he felt a ball strike him on the right arm, for the moment disabling him; but he forgot this wound when he saw that the Indians were boarding at the bow, where the frightened horses stood huddled together. Snatching up a pair of pistols, he rushed forward to guard the threatened point. But when both his pistols had been fired, the redskins were still attempting to climb over the bulwarks, and he had no arms at hand. Half his men were already *hors de combat*. In this emergency, the captain found himself stepping backwards upon a pile of billets which had been cut for firewood—weapons at a pinch! With these he now laid about him so manfully that he fairly drove the assailants back into their canoe. And suddenly with a yell they all withdrew from the attack.

The cause of this was the appearance of another boat full of white people, on which the Indians now fastened like a pack of hungry wolves. Here they met a different reception. Those on board were so frightened that they cowered into the cabin, and allowed themselves to be mastered without resistance. Their craft was at once taken into the shore, and one or two of them were massacred on the spot—a horrible hint to the rest of what they might expect.

Presently the canoes returned to the chase of the first boat. Into them the artful savages had forced the white women whom they had just taken prisoners, hoping that now the crew of the boat would not fire for fear of injuring their friends. But cruel necessity gave them no choice but to defend themselves to the last. They could have done the prisoners little good by submitting to share their fate, and for them death by a stray bullet might be a merciful rescue from prolonged agonies. Afterwards, indeed, the bodies of these unfortunate persons, men, women, and children, were found stripped and tied to trees, with indications that they had been whipped to death.

By their well-directed fire, Captain Hubbell's crew had once more beaten off the canoes, when they found themselves in face of a fresh danger. Their boat had drifted within thirty yards from the shore, where some hundreds of painted warriors now sprung into sight, whooping and firing into the little vessel, on which only two men by this time remained unhurt. These two took the oars and tugged with all their might while the rest lay down on deck. Luckily they were all able to cover themselves by the bulwarks, or by blankets hung up in the stern; but if a man exposed his body for a moment, it was almost certain death; all the horses but one were shot. The sides of the boat and the oars were filled with balls; and it is said that on afterwards counting the holes in the blankets, they found a hundred and twenty-two in the space of five feet square. For many minutes, which must have seemed to them like hours, they passed slowly through this storm of lead with the dreadful prospect of running on shore among the crowd of exulting Indians. But at last a happy chance came to their aid. The current swept out their boat into the middle of the stream, and when they were no longer within shot of the shore, the little band put all the strength left them into three

hearty cheers, with which they took leave of the baffled enemy.

Three of the nine men had been killed or mortally wounded ; most of the rest were severely hurt. The women and children were uninjured except one young boy, who, when the fight was over, asked the captain to take a ball out of his head ; it had lodged beneath the skin after passing through the side of the boat. The ball was removed, and the lad saying coolly, 'That is not all,' showed a nasty wound in his elbow.

'Why did not you tell me of this before?' asked his mother in very natural astonishment.

'Because the captain told us to keep quiet while the fighting was going on,' was the little Spartan's answer.

With some difficulty, so exhausted were the crew, the boat safely reached its destination. Next day arrived several other boats which had come down the river in company, without being molested by the Indians after their experience of the resistance which a single crew could make. Red warriors carefully counted the cost even of that most coveted treasure in their eyes, a pale-face scalp.

Everybody has heard of the Indian custom of scalping ; but everybody does not know how often it happened that a man was scalped while still alive, generally in the heat of a fight, and recovered from the hideous wound after all. Of such cases the most extraordinary is, perhaps, that of Captain Gregg, who owed his life to the sagacity and affection of a dog.

In the revolutionary war, a great part was played by the forts on the borders of New York, which had been originally built by the English as a protection against the French, and were now of as good service to the Americans. No post was more exposed than Fort Stanwix, buried in the forest near the head of the Mohawk river. From the outbreak of the war it was in constant danger. The Indian's mode of fighting was of little

use against fortified places, indeed ; but the garrison were obliged to be ceaselessly on their guard. Small scouting parties of savages or loyalists skulked in the woods about the fort. The soldiers going out to cut wood or turf were often attacked ; and it was not always easy to get in provisions, or to keep up communication with Albany, the nearest large town.

The utmost precaution being thus necessary, the commander ordered that none of his men were to shoot in the woods, for fear of bringing down the howling enemy upon them. But the hunting instincts of the woodsmen were too strong for this prohibition. One morning Captain Gregg and Corporal Madison went out after breakfast with their guns and a little dog belonging to the former. A great flock of pigeons had appeared in the neighbourhood, and these two men were determined to have a shot at them.

The commander had judged the danger only too well. A few days later some children, harmlessly picking blackberries close to the walls of the fort, were fired on and two of them killed. Next month the fort was regularly besieged. But poor Gregg and Madison had not to wait so long to repent of their rash disobedience to orders.

They were just about to fire at some birds, when the woods rang with the report of two other guns, and both men fell to the ground. Then two Indians bounded forth from the trees behind which they had taken such sure aim, and rushed forward to secure the scalps of their victims. The corporal was killed. Captain Gregg had been wounded in the side ; but he had enough presence of mind to consider that his only chance of life, in this helpless condition, was to feign death. He lay as still as a corpse, and did not flinch or utter a sound when the Indian struck him several times with his tomahawk. He had even the fortitude to bear, without moving, the cutting and

tearing off of his scalp. As soon as he had secured this trophy, the Indian hurried away with his companion.

When they were gone, the unfortunate officer was able to rise and look about him. The pain he suffered must have been frightful, and, after all, he had gained little by his wonderful feat of endurance. He could not hope to make his way to the fort; the only prospect before him was that of dying in slow agony, unless by any means help could find him in this lonely spot, which was not likely, as he was between one and two miles from the fort. Dizzy and covered with blood, he managed to stagger to the body of his dead comrade. Pillowing his head on it, he found some little relief. His senses were still so clear that he looked at his watch, and perhaps tried to reckon how many hours he had to live. Now the little dog came up, showing the liveliest distress at its master's suffering, yelping and fawning upon the captain, as if begging to know how it could be of use. But poor Gregg was in no state to be comforted by such expressions of sympathy. He spoke crossly to the dog, telling it to leave him alone, and to go and fetch some one if it really wished to help him.

As if the faithful animal understood, it flew off, and never stopped till it reached a part of the river where two or three men were fishing. Their attention was soon called by its behaviour. It barked, it whined, it ran on, turning round to see if they would follow; it caught the skirts of their coats in its teeth, trying to pull them along; it pushed against their legs; it did everything but speak to make them accompany it. At last they began to guess that something was wrong, and agreed to go with it. Upon the way they had almost turned back, considering the danger and the absurdity of being led in such a way by a dog; but the poor thing showed such marks of eagerness and trouble that it managed to bring them up to the place where Gregg was lying, sufficiently conscious to speak,

and to be amazed at his little dog's good sense and affection. He had been for four hours in this miserable situation.

The men hurried to the fort with news of what they had seen, and a strong party was at once sent out to carry in the poor fellows. The corporal was buried, and it seemed likely that Gregg's comrades would have to do the same last duty for him. When brought in at three o'clock, he was still able to relate what had happened to him; but he soon became delirious, and his recovery was very doubtful. In the end, however, he did recover, and served throughout the war without his scalp, but not without having his wits about him.

The dogs of the backwoods had something of their masters' stoicism and self-restraint. They were carefully trained not to bark, for often the slightest sound would have brought death upon the hunter. Their senses seem to have acquired a peculiar acuteness which was of the greatest service to the white men in warning them of danger being at hand; they would scent Indians as surely as game. There are cases in which the horses also of the settlers are said to have showed uneasiness on approaching a place where Indians were lying hid.

Here is another story of a good dog. Two Kentucky hunters, named Rhodes and Stockton, were sleeping in the woods, when a party of Indians fired upon them, then stole their horses and made off. They might as well have remained, for Stockton was shot dead, and Rhodes had been so severely wounded in the hips as to be almost helpless. In this state he contrived to drag himself into a creek close by, and hid himself in the water for some time among a pile of brushwood and logs which had been drifted together. Finding that the Indians did not appear, he resolved to make for home, injured and exhausted as he was, and had actually crawled fourteen miles in six days when he was luckily discovered by another

hunter. The news having been brought to the settlement, a party of men started for the scene of the disaster, where they expected to find Stockton's body mangled by wild beasts. But no! they found it untouched, with their comrade's dog standing sentry over it, though half starved and scarcely able to move. All round, the earth was torn up in a circle by the baffled wolves and panthers that this brave dog had kept off from its dead master.

To return from dogs to men: it is hard to choose among all the feats of daring and fortitude that are the boast of every county in the backwoods States. One of the most celebrated stories of an unlooked-for escape is that of Brady, which may be recognised as having given more than one hint to writers of fiction. Captain Samuel Brady was in his day one of the most celebrated Indian fighters of the Ohio valley, and the best remembered of his exploits is the leap which in 1780 he took over the Cuyahoga river. With a small party of rangers he was out scouting, when there came upon them four times their own number of Indians, and, as other brave men have had to do, they all ran away as fast as they could. By Brady's directions, the men separated, each trying to make good his own escape; but the Indians followed no one but the captain, whom they recognised, and were determined to take, dead or alive; but rather alive than dead, that they might torture him in revenge for his successful attacks on them. For this reason they forbore to fire, knowing that he was running into a loop of land shut in by a bend of the river, which in some places was fifty yards broad, and thinking thus to have him in a trap.

Brady knew the ground as well as they did, and was quite aware of his danger. As the only chance of escape, he made for a place where the river rushes through a hollow chasm, twenty-two or twenty-three feet wide at the top, and some

fifty feet deep. It was certain death to fall into the deep boiling rapids beneath ; but behind were the ministers of a ten times more horrible death, who had a too fatal score to settle with their old enemy. He gathered all his strength, made a mighty spring, cleared the chasm, and landed on a shelf of the opposite bank, which, luckily, was rather lower than the place from which he leaped.

The Indians bounded up just too late, and could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the victim of whom they had made so sure, scrambling, by the aid of the bushes, up the other side. None of them durst follow such a daring leader over that frightful gulf. They stood lost in amazement, and could not restrain their admiration. But before he was out of shot they recovered themselves enough to fire upon him, now that there was so little chance of making him prisoner. Brady ran crooked, bounded, stooped, and did all in his power to baffle their aim ; but one bullet struck him on the hip, and he soon found he could not keep up the pace much longer. Seeing that he was wounded, his pursuers resumed the chase. They lost a good deal of time in going round to cross the river at a more practicable place, but, for all that, Brady found them gaining upon him with his stiff limb. So he was fain to hide himself in a small lake, which now bears his name. Plunging in, he swam like a fish under water, and came up beneath the trunk of a large oak, which had fallen across the surface. Here he was completely hidden, being just able to breathe.

Up came the Indians, following the track of his blood, which led them to the edge of the water. There it disappeared. They searched about everywhere, but could see no traces of him, and fancied he must have been drowned. At one time they were standing on the very trunk underneath which he was hidden, and Brady, who understood their

language, could hear them resolving to give up looking for him—perhaps the most agreeable words he ever heard in his life.

When the coast was clear, he slipped out and hobbled homewards. He arrived in safety, as did all his men. Some time afterwards he visited the chasm, and measured it with pardonable pride. The place is still pointed out, and is known as 'Brady's Leap.'¹

Thus, too, we have 'Rogers' Slide,' where Major Rogers, hotly chased in the hard winter-time, dashed on his snow shoes down a thousand feet of an almost precipitous mountain side. And American boys know, if ours do not, where another hard-pressed militia officer, M'Cullough by name, leaped his horse over a steep bank three hundred feet high, among crashing timber and falling stones, but both man and horse came through the desperate attempt, and galloped gaily off before the eyes of the Indians peering over the brink for their dead
dies.

No animals contain so many glorious feats of *running away*, to do which with success was among the highest arts of woodland warfare, often requiring more courage and craft than to stand and fight against hopeless odds. Another story of the kind which may seem incredible, we will take as vouched for in M'Lung's *Sketches of Western Adventure*, the author of which had it from the hero's own mouth:—

In a body of rangers accompanying General St. Clair's expedition against the Indians in 1791, was a young man, named William Kennan, noted for being the swiftest runner of the

¹ 'Christopher North,' than whom no man was better qualified to judge, says: 'Twenty feet on level ground is a first-rate running single jump, but has been done often; twenty-one is something very extraordinary, but noways apocryphal; and twenty-two is, we believe, accomplished about once every twenty years, and that almost always by an Irishman.' The Professor himself had jumped twenty-three feet with a run and a slight drop.

company. His activity stood him in good stead one day when he was serving on an outpost. 'Just as day was dawning, he observed about thirty Indians within one hundred yards of the guard fire, advancing cautiously towards the spot where he stood together with about twenty rangers, the rest being considerably in the rear. Supposing it to be a mere scouting party, as usual, and not superior in number to the rangers, he sprang forwards a few paces in order to shelter himself in a spot of peculiarly rank grass, and firing with a quick aim upon the foremost Indian, he instantly fell flat upon his face, and proceeded with all possible rapidity to reload his gun, not doubting for a moment but that the rangers would maintain their position and support him. The Indians, however, rushed forwards in such overwhelming masses that the rangers were compelled to fly with precipitation, leaving young Kennan in total ignorance of his danger. Fortunately the captain of his company had observed him when he threw himself in the grass, and suddenly shouted aloud, "Run, Kennan, or you are a dead man!"

'He instantly sprang to his feet and beheld Indians within ten feet of him, while his company was already more than one hundred yards in front.

'Not a moment was to be lost. He darted off, every muscle strained to its utmost, and was pursued by a dozen of the enemy with loud yells. He at first pressed straight forwards to the usual fording-place in the creek, which ran between the rangers and the main army; but several Indians who had passed him before he arose from the grass, threw themselves in the way and completely cut him off from the rest. By the most powerful exertions, he had thrown the whole body of pursuers behind him, with the exception of one young chief, who displayed a swiftness and perseverance equal to his own.

'In the circuit which Kennan was obliged to take, the race

was continued for more than four hundred yards. The distance between them was about eighteen feet, which Kennan could not increase nor his adversary diminish. Each, for the time, put his whole soul into the race. Kennan, as far as he was able, kept his eye upon the motions of his pursuer, lest he should throw the tomahawk, which he held aloft in a menacing attitude; at length, finding that no other Indian was immediately at hand, he determined to try the metal of his pursuer in a different manner, and felt for his tomahawk in order to turn at bay. It had escaped from its sheath, however, while he lay in the grass, and his hair had almost lifted the cap from his head when he saw himself totally disarmed. As he had slackened his pace for a moment, the Indian was almost within reach of him, when he recommenced the race; but the idea of being without arms lent wings to his flight, and, for the first time, he saw himself gaining ground. He had watched the motions of his pursuer too closely, however, to pay proper attention to the nature of the ground before him, and he suddenly found himself in front of a large tree which had been blown down, and upon which brush and other impediments lay to the height of eight or nine feet.

'The Indian, who heretofore had not uttered the slightest sound, now gave a short, quick yell, as if sure of his victim. Kennan had not a moment to deliberate; he must clear the impediment at a leap or perish.'

And of course, as he lived to tell the story, you understand that with one mighty bound he cleared the huge fallen trunk, branches, brushwood, and all; and as the Indian could only stare in astonishment at this almost incredible feat, young Kennan was now able to run under the high bank of the creek, which sheltered him from fire, till he reached a place where he could swim across, and came panting and dripping among his comrades.

We might have half this volume filled with similar adventures, but for the present let us content ourselves with one more from the same author, which must have hugely commended itself to the humour of the backwoodsmen. A lad named Downing was being chased by an Indian, and like Kennan, he found across his path a great poplar which had been blown up by the roots. Then as he ran round by one side of it, the Indian darted along the other to meet him. But 'it happened that a large she-bear was suckling her cubs in a bed which she had made at the root of the tree, and as the Indian reached that point first she instantly sprang upon him, and a prodigious uproar took place. The Indian yelled and stabbed with his knife; the bear growled and saluted him with one of her most endearing hugs, while Downing, fervently wishing her success, ran off through the woods without waiting to see the event of the struggle.'



CHAPTER VIII.

THE BROTHERS SAMMONS.



AMONG all the border stories of perilous adventure, one of the most interesting, though not the best known, is that of the Brothers Sammons, as related in W. L. Stone's *Life of Joseph Brant*.

We English, it cannot be too often repeated should be concerned to think how, during the revolutionary war, the frontier settlements of New York suffered from the incursions of Indians in the British service. The Iroquois tribes, the most warlike of all the red men, and the native inhabitants of this part of the country, took the royalist side in the quarrel, and did all they could to harass and ruin the thinly-scattered settlers who were turning their hunting-grounds into fields and villages. Being familiar with every path and stream, these Indians were able to make frequent raids from Canada upon the more exposed situations, killing, burning, and destroying, and returning with their booty and prisoners before the people had time to gather for defence or

pursuit. The poor farmer never knew whether he should gather the corn which he had planted with such anxiety, and reaped at the risk of his life. No man went to bed without fearing that all his property might be destroyed through the night, and himself and his family obliged to fly or fight for their lives before morning. Hundreds were killed in these forays, or put to death afterwards by tortures which the English officers could not always succeed in preventing. Hundreds of women and children, as well as men, were driven off into captivity; mothers were torn away from their children, husbands from their wives. Many families, in despair, left the neighbourhood, which at the end of the war had only one-third of its former population. There were said to have been made here three hundred widows and two thousand orphans.

For seven years this miserable state of things lasted. The attacks were generally so sudden and so well contrived that the settlers were taken by surprise, or assailed by numbers which made resistance out of the question. If warned in time, they had usually to leave all to the mercy of the invaders, and seek refuge in the nearest town or fort, where they were often obliged to remain months at a time, without daring to go to their homes.

This irregular warfare owed its devastating character not alone to Indian ferocity, but to the exasperated 'Tories' who directed and took part in it, often assuming the dress and paint of Indians that they might set the torch to their old neighbours' barns, and butcher the men whom they had once met as friends at church or market. Seldom have the horrors of civil war been more clearly revealed. It will be long before Americans forget the ravages committed by loyalist partisans; yet it should also be remembered that these men had some reason for exasperation. For no other crime than adhering to the king, men of the highest character had been mobbed,

stripped, beaten, ducked, tarred and feathered, ridden on rails or in carts, exposed to public ignominy; their property had been confiscated, and they had been banished from their homes and families. Being thus almost forced into arms against what had been their own country, they found themselves in no mood to spare the political enemies who were triumphing over their poverty and exile. To their instigation it must surely have been owing that British officers disgraced their uniform by offering the Indians a bounty not only upon prisoners, but upon the scalps of people who spoke the same tongue and held the same faith.

One of the most distinguished of the loyalist families was that of Sir William Johnson, the celebrated superintendent of Indian affairs, who held a unique position in the American colonies, living in almost feudal state on the Mohawk river among a devoted Scotch tenantry, and exercising an extraordinary influence both over his white neighbours and the restless Iroquois tribes. He died at the breaking-out of these troubles, as some suspect, seeking death by his own hand rather than join in the bloody struggle which he foresaw too clearly. His son, Sir John, took the side of the king, and was eventually obliged to leave the country along with his partisans. He thenceforth played an active part in the British attacks from Canada, and proved a sore thorn in the side of his rebellious State.

In May 1780, Sir John Johnson, at the head of several hundred soldiers, Tories and Indians, stole through the woods from Lake Champlain, and suddenly appeared in the neighbourhood of Johnson Hall. His course was marked by murders, burning, and plundering of the Whig settlers; but the main object of this expedition was a strange enough one—to get possession of his own house and recover his silver plate, which had been hid away in a cellar at the time

he had found it desirable to remove with all haste. The inhabitants were so much taken by surprise, that no effectual resistance could be organized. Sir John dug up his plate, and was able to pass some hours at his old home before retreating with the booty and prisoners that had fallen into the hands of his forces, and also with some score of his negro slaves, who, like the rest of his large property, were found in the keeping of new masters.

Among the prisoners were a worthy farmer named Sampson Sammons and his three stout sons, who had been dragged out of their beds in the dead of night, and forced helplessly to witness the blazing ruin of their homestead. Sir John had, in times past, owed something to the kindness of old Sammons; so now, at his indignant remonstrances, he and a few others were set free by the baronet. The youngest son also managed to separate himself from the rest of the prisoners, and to slip off unseen. But the two elder sons, Jacob and Frederick, were carried away with a number of their neighbours, whose wives and daughters were left houseless and despairing. Such were the scenes of that miserable war between Christian men.

The retreat was as hasty as the advance. Before the militia could collect in sufficient strength to intercept him, Sir John's forces, slinking through the forest rather like a gang of robbers than a royal army, had reached their boats and were off up the lake to Canada. In a few days, Jacob and Frederick Sammons were brought to Fort Chambly, on the river Richelieu or Sorel, which was thought far enough from the New York frontier to be a safe prison.

No sooner did the brothers find themselves in captivity than they, very naturally, began to consider how they should get out of it. Their first plan was a bold and simple one. The garrison seemed to be small and careless; the prisoners

numbered forty. Every day the place of their confinement was visited by an officer and four or five men. Jacob Sammons proposed to his companions in misfortune that some of them should suddenly seize and disarm this little party, while the rest ran out and mastered the arms of the men on guard, which were piled in the courtyard; then they might make a brave fight for their liberty. But the others shrank from such a daring attempt, so Jacob and Frederick resolved to escape together, and did not wait long for an opportunity.

One day these two were marched out, under the care of a guard, to fetch a cask of spruce beer from the brewery. They had already agreed on what they meant to do, for, observing that the soldiers did not keep their muskets primed, they thought this would give them a chance of making a run for it. Suddenly they broke away at the same moment, dashing off for the woods. Then, as they expected, their guards were so taken by surprise, that, before the guns were ready, the fugitives were out of shot.

Away they went with the soldiers after them, and the shouts and shots arousing the garrison, others came out to join the chase. But it was not easy to catch these active backwoodsmen running for their freedom. The two brothers were fast gaining on the start which they had got, when Jacob unfortunately fell into a ditch and sprained his ankle. Frederick turned back to help him, but he entreated his brother to save himself and leave him to take his chance. The smoke of the guns probably hid this accident from the pursuers, and they did not observe that Jacob, now unable to keep up with Frederick, turned aside into a clump of bushes, where he hid himself between two logs, and lay, with what anxiety may be imagined, till the soldiers came up. To his

great relief, they ran by him without suspicion, and he was no less pleased when in half an hour they returned, passing so near his place of refuge that he could hear them talking and laughing, and learned that they had given up the chase as a bad job.

It was now sunset, and Jacob lay close among the bushes till the long June evening had faded into darkness. An arrangement had been made between him and his brother, that, if separated, they should meet at a certain place at ten o'clock at night. But he had no means of marking the time, which must have gone by slowly enough to him, and he was either too early, or Frederick too late, in keeping this appointment; or possibly one of them went to the wrong place. At all events, when Jacob arrived at the rendezvous, no form but his own appeared in the moonlight, and his voice was echoed back only by the mocking cries of owls and wolves. After waiting some time, and shouting till he feared to bring the enemy upon him, he lost all hope of rejoining his brother, and set off southwards as fast as his injured foot would allow him.

Throughout the night he hobbled on down the right bank of the broad stream which connects Lake Champlain with the St. Lawrence, and in the morning he was near Fort St. John's. The brothers had agreed where they would cross the river; but here again some misunderstanding or mischance prevented their meeting, and each of them well knew how dangerous was delay. When Jacob was about to swim across, he found the British soldiers too thick in the neighbourhood of the fort, and to escape observation, took a circuit through the woods. He had neither food nor arms, nor even shoes, and durst not be seen by those who would require him to give an account of himself; so we may fancy his pitiful plight as he toiled on under the summer sun, starting at every sound, and stealing away into cover like a wild beast at the sight of

his fellow-men. Yet it were hard to say whether the danger would be greater while he was still near or when he had got clear of the Canadian settlements.

At noon he came upon a small clearing where a man and a boy were hoeing potatoes. He fancied that these might be French settlers who would not be ill disposed towards an enemy of the English ; and when he saw them called in to dinner by the good-wife of their log cabin, his hunger urged him to throw himself on their mercy. He came up to the cabin and begged its hospitality, confessing honestly how he came to be in such need of food and rest. To his dismay, it proved that the settler was one who had been driven from his home by the rebels, so that he was the last man likely to show favour to such a fugitive. He welcomed poor Sammons with abuse, and threatened to fetch the guard from the fort. But his bark proved worse than his bite. He and his son went out to their work again without making any attempt to call the soldiers. And the wife, like a true woman, took pity on the guest who had no claim on her but misfortune. She gave him a bowl of bread and milk, which he ate at the door, that he might not be caught in a trap. Distrusting the man's intentions, he then went back into the woods to seek a safer place of repose. But he had noticed a gun and ammunition, which he resolved to get hold of, by fair means or foul, before setting out on the long journey through a perilous wilderness that now lay before him.

So at nightfall he ventured back to the house, the master of which proved after all not so unfriendly as might be expected. For, while Jacob was there, a party of soldiers came to get milk, whom, from the upper storey to which he had betaken himself in haste, he could both see and hear through the chinks of the floor, and was in terror lest he should at any moment be discovered. But the settler did not betray him,

and when the soldiers had gone away, and he stole down the ladder, the wife gave him another bowl of bread and milk. She strongly advised him to surrender himself, and become a good subject of King George, who, she said, was sure to conquer in the end ; and as he would not take this advice, she offered, if he would stay hiding in the neighbourhood for a day or two, to get him a little store of provisions, and perhaps even a pair of shoes. But this proposal, too, he declined, being eager to be off from the British posts. The kindness of the woman, however, so touched him that he had not the heart to help himself to her husband's gun, as he had intended, and started on his journey without any food or the means of getting it.

Now at the outset he met with a piece of good luck. Having, through the night, reached Lake Champlain, he came upon a hut in which lay a party of soldiers fast asleep, without any sentinel to watch their canoe on the shore. Cautiously approaching and discovering the state of the case, the lame and footsore traveller made bold to get into the canoe, and paddled gently off without arousing its careless owners. Now he trusted that he had a clear way by water to the head of the lake, where he would find himself among friends.

But alas ! this hope was soon disappointed. Next night he came to a narrow channel, the sides of which were occupied by the soldiers of the enemy, who, moreover, were keeping vigilant guard at this important pass. He judged it folly to run the gauntlet of their fire, so he landed on the eastern shore, and, when he had slunk round the dangerous point, took his way once more on foot, following the line of the lake towards Albany.

It was a terrible journey through the rugged waste of wood and water that then separated the Canadian from the American settlements. Small heart could the poor fellow have had to

enjoy those grand and picturesque aspects which are now the delight of tourists and amateur woodsmen. By day his naked feet, bruised and bleeding, could scarcely carry him onwards. By night the swarm of mosquitoes and wood lice troubled his sorely-needed rest. All around him the woods were full of creatures preying on each other; man only was like to starve amid abundance which he had no means of bringing within his reach. For four days he lived on birch bark and twigs. Then he contrived to catch a few fish in a brook, which he ate raw, for want of being able to make a fire. Next day he caught a black duck sitting on her eggs. As soon as the feathers could be torn off, he greedily devoured the bird, but he could not bring himself to eat the eggs when he found that they were almost hatched.

'On the tenth day,' says Mr. Stone, 'he came to a small lake. His feet were now in such a horrible state that he could scarcely crawl along. Finding a mitigation of pain by bathing them in water, he plunged his feet into the lake, and lay down upon its margin. For a time it seemed as though he could never rise on his feet again. Worn down by hunger and fatigue, bruised in body, and wounded in spirit, in a lone wilderness, with no eye to pity and no human arm to protect, he felt as though he must remain in that spot until it should please God in His goodness to quench the dim spark of life that remained. Still he was comforted in some measure by the thought that he was in the hands of a Being without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls to the ground.

'Refreshed at length, though to a trifling degree, he resumed his weary way, when, on raising his right leg over the trunk of a fallen tree, he was bitten in the calf by a rattlesnake. Quick as a flash, with his pocket-knife, he made an incision in his leg, removing the wounded flesh to a greater depth than the fangs of the serpent had penetrated. His

next business was to kill the venomous reptile and dress it for eating, thus appropriating the enemy that had sought to take his life to its prolongation. His first meal was made from the heart and fat of the serpent. Feeling somewhat strengthened by the repast, and finding, moreover, that he could not travel farther in his present condition, he determined to remain where he was for a few days, and by repose, and feeding upon the body of the snake, recruit his strength. Discovering a dry fungus upon the trunk of a maple tree, he succeeded in striking a fire, by which his comforts were essentially increased. Still he was obliged to creep upon his hands and knees to gather fuel; and on the third day he was yet in such a state of exhaustion as to be utterly unable to proceed. Supposing that death was inevitable, and very near, he crawled to the foot of a tree, on the bark of which he commenced inscribing his name, in the expectation that he should leave his bones there, and in the hope that in some way, by the aid of the inscription, his family might ultimately be apprised of his fate. While engaged in this sad work, a crowd of painful thoughts crowded upon his mind; the tears involuntarily stole down his cheeks, and before he had completed the melancholy task, he fell asleep.'

After staying here four days, he found himself a little stronger, and made another effort to proceed, with part of the serpent as his sole provision. His feet were so sore that he could not move without binding round them his hat and waistcoat. At night, though as yet he had seen no signs of men, it was borne in upon him so strongly that he was near the settlements, that he wept for joy, and was encouraged to struggle on. And next day, in the afternoon, he saw a house. Dragging up to it his exhausted limbs, he reached the door, and found himself at last among friends.

He remained at this place for some days, both to gain strength and in the hope of hearing of his brother. But as Frederick did not come, Jacob travelled on to Schenectady, where he had a joyful meeting with his wife and family. There was still no news of his lost companion, and he began to fear that some evil must have overtaken him.

Their house being thus destroyed, the Sammons family removed to another part of the State, with feelings towards the British Government that were not likely to be more friendly than before. Two years went by, and more, during which they heard nothing of Frederick, and came to think of their brave boy as a skeleton bleaching in some lonely nook of these northern forests. Now comes a part of the story which will not recommend itself to a sceptical generation. It rests, however, on the authority of Mr. Stone, a writer of high character, and he had it both from the written narrative of Jacob Sammons, and from frequent conversations with another brother, who rose to be a member of Congress, and was alive when Mr. Stone's book was published. The Mr. De Witt, also, about to be mentioned, is said to have corroborated the facts as far as they were within his knowledge.

One night Jacob dreamed that his brother Frederick was still alive, and that there was a letter from him at the house of their neighbour, De Witt, a few miles off. In the morning he told his dream to the rest of the family, and even repeated the contents of the letter, to be laughed at for his pains. But the dream had made such an impression on him, that he set off to Mr. De Witt's house, and asked for the letter. Posts and roads were so rare in the settlements, that there was nothing extraordinary in a letter being delivered no nearer to its destination.

Mr. De Witt, whose house, being on the high-road, was

probably the frequent depository of communications, declared that he knew nothing of such a letter. At Jacob's request he looked for it, but without success. Still young Sammons earnestly persisted; and when further search was made, what should they find but a letter which, the very night of the dream, had been left by an officer on his way to Philadelphia, but which had been carelessly allowed to fall behind a barrel! Restraining his eagerness, Jacob made Mr. De Witt open and read the letter, while he repeated its contents. And it was from no other than his lost brother, to the very same effect as he had dreamed! Frederick was safe at Schenectady.

On his un hoped-for arrival at home, he had a tale to tell even more adventurous than that of Jacob. When they separated, no sooner had he got clear of the soldiers than he fell in with a party of Indians on their way to the fort. Recognising him for a fugitive, they fired on him and took up the chase. So now he had to strain all his powers to distance these fresh pursuers; and when at last he was able to sit down and rest, his nose was bleeding from the violent exertions he had been obliged to make.

At the appointed time, as he believed, he came to the rendezvous, where he expected to find Jacob. He called out to him so often and so loud as to arouse the guard at the fort; and he even ventured so near to the walls that he was fired at by the sentry, and the soldiers turned out for another hunt. Then he had to hurry away, but he lingered by the river till dawn in the hope of yet falling in with his brother. When he no longer durst delay, he crossed the stream in a boat which most opportunely presented itself, and in pursuance of their plan, turned southwards along the eastern bank.

His first care was to secure provisions. Looking on himself as in an enemy's country, he reconnoitred a farmhouse in the

early twilight, and not being able to lay his hands on any poultry, he took the liberty of cutting the throat of a bullock and loading himself with one of its hind quarters. After tramping some way, he came in sight of another house, where he hoped to provide himself with bread and salt and perhaps firearms. But the inmates turned out to be French people, who either could not or would not understand a word he said. On he went, taking care to steer clear of St. John's, and at night contrived to light a fire, at which he dried and smoked the bullock's flesh after cutting it into strips. Out of the hide he made himself a sort of haversack to hold this provision. On the third day he was lucky enough to recruit his store by killing a fawn. Next day he found the name of some former traveller carved upon a tree, with the information that it was only eight miles from Lake Champlain. He soon struck the shore and found a canoe, which was, however, in such a state that it began to go to pieces as soon as he launched out in it, so he was obliged to scramble on shore and take to his feet again.

For seven days all thus went as well with him as could be hoped, and he was in high spirits, expecting that another day or two would bring him to the settlements. But on the eighth morning he awoke to find himself prostrated by an attack of pleurisy. To add to his miserable state, the rain now came on and continued to pour for three days, during which he lay on the wet ground in pain and weakness, without food, fire, or shelter. When on the fourth day he felt a little better and tried to feed himself, his meat had become uneatable. Intense thirst urged him to crawl to a pond of stagnant water, from which he might not choose but drink, putting aside the green scum as best he could. The pond swarmed with frogs, which he caught and devoured raw, not being able to strike a light. Thus he lived for a

fortnight, and scarcely hoped to stand on his feet again. At this very time, if he had only known it, his brother Jacob was lying almost as helpless not far from him, eating the dead rattlesnake and carving his name on the tree which seemed like to be his only tombstone.

Frederick's wretched sick-bed was on a high bluff near the lake. Gathering all his strength, he managed to hoist his hat upon a pole, where it might be seen by some passing vessel. This proved probably the means of saving his life, yet not as he desired. The signal was seen from a vessel ; a boat was sent on shore ; he was taken on board senseless and speechless, and came to himself to learn that he was once more in the hands of the enemy. Soon he had the satisfaction of hearing that his brother Jacob had reached home in safety ; but after fortune having seemed at first more favourable to himself, it was his case to know how great a slip there may be between the cup and the lip.

He did not deny who he was, and on the earliest opportunity was sent back to his old quarters at Chambly. He was still unable to walk when he arrived here, but his gaolers did not spare their jovial mockery on so unexpectedly seeing him again. He was now treated with great brutality, being kept in close confinement for fourteen months, in irons which ate to the bone, causing on one leg a gangrened wound which still troubled him more than half a century later. He affirms that the commander of the fort, out of spite for his daring attempt at escape, tried to prevent the surgeon from removing these irons even to dress the horrible sores. 'The British officer whose heart enabled him to do this thing,' says J. H. Perkins, a thoughtful American writer not prone to undue bitterness, 'was named—how aptly!—Steele. He was a captain in the 32d Regiment. May God have mercy on his soul !'

Here is a matter in which it must be confessed that our

troops in this war were often deeply to blame. It may be pleaded with some reason that they were not always responsible for the excesses of their Indian allies. But the unnecessary harshness, to give it no uglier name, which was exercised towards prisoners of war, is a blot on our annals ; and it is little wonder that England should have become a name of hatred to the sons of men who pined in such places as the Jersey prison-ship and the crowded barracks of Canada. Yet this charge is not to be made indiscriminately. A different spirit was sometimes shown between men who might have been neighbours and friends before the rebellion ; and against the cruel Captain Steele may be set another English officer, who, meeting poor Frederick as they were dragging him to Chambly on a wheelbarrow, took pity on him, and slipped a guinea and a couple of dollars into his hand, but could do no more to favour him.

Towards the end of next year, Frederick Sammons, still wearing handcuffs, was transferred with his fellow-prisoners to an island in the rapids of St. Lawrence. There were two hundred Americans confined here under constant guard, sentries being placed all round the island when the prisoners were loose upon it ; though one who has seen that foaming channel might think it could well supply the place of walls and bars. Yet they were driven to such desperation by their troubles, that plans for escape were constantly being formed, and some lost their lives in the rash attempt.

In the narrative of another of these prisoners, Zadoc Steele, it is stated that the guard was formed of refugee Tories, more the enemies of their own countrymen than even the British soldiers. Their commander for some time was a young man named M'Kelvin, who had old grudges to wreak against the rebels, and behaved with such brutality that he was afterwards dismissed from the king's service. He is accused of cruelly

whipping and torturing the unfortunate men thus put into his power. When they refused to shovel away the snow so as to make a path to his house, he punished them by extinguishing their fires, and by confining twenty of them in fetters in a room with open doors and windows, without the slightest protection against the bitter cold of a Canadian winter. The results were that almost all had their hands, feet, or faces frozen—a most undue punishment for disobedience to an order which, as the prisoners held, he had no right to give, even though this refusal was accompanied with some characteristically American eloquence about ‘unalienable rights’ and the like.

Frederick Sammons was no doubt foremost in the schemes for escape which occupied his fellow-prisoners throughout that wretched winter. On one occasion he was detected, and once more thrown into irons for a time. But no sooner were his limbs at liberty than again he was bent on securing his freedom. On the 17th of August, two years after his recapture, he and a man called MacMullen resolved to do it or die. Watching the moment when the nearest sentry, as he paced up and down, turned his back to them, they hurried to the water’s edge, flung themselves into the rapid stream, and were borne out of shot before what they had done was observed. The other prisoners, gazing after them with envy and astonishment, saw them wave their hands above the water in token of farewell.

But it might have been farewell for ever. Before long the daring swimmers found themselves swept into the wildest part of the rapids, where

‘The brain grows dizzy with the whirl and hiss
Of the fast-crowding billows as they roll
Like struggling demons to the vast abyss.’

They nerved themselves for the perilous ordeal, and diving

beneath each gigantic surge, and struggling as best they could with the torrents that would have dashed them against the rocks, they shot unhurt through one seething whirlpool after another, till in the quieter water beneath they were at last able to exchange breathless congratulations.

Still the danger was not over. So strong was the current, that for some miles they were hurried on by it, and when they did succeed in landing it was on the north bank, the wrong side of the river for safety. Before going farther, they must get some supplies, and especially 'fireworks,' as the settlers called the materials for striking fire, so indispensable for travellers in the wilderness. They had tinder-boxes, but not tinder. Their first care was to provide themselves with stout cudgels, as they had no weapons but their knives. Thus armed, they boldly entered a little hamlet of French people. Necessity knows no law. The two men walked into an old woman's house, and unceremoniously laid hands on some clothes, a loaf of bread, and rags to make tinder. The old woman, as soon as she had recovered from her surprise at the appearance of these plundering scarecrows, very naturally ran out to give the alarm. The inhabitants collected with sticks and stones; the fugitives made for the woods, but soon had to turn and show fight. In the end they managed to get away with their spoil.

But one loaf of bread did not go far between them after the scanty rations of the prison island; so at nightfall they came prowling out, and captured a calf and a canoe. Thus supplied, they embarked on the river, meaning to cross to the other shore. But when midway, their paddle broke, and the stream bore them down towards the Cedar Rapids, the shooting of which, in a steamboat steered by Indians, is now one of the most memorable experiences of modern travellers in Canada. Now they appeared to be lost. Luckily, how-

ever, there was an island at the head of the rapids, where their frail bark was caught in the branches of a fallen tree, and upset; yet they succeeded in getting on the island, calf and all, and after a welcome feast of veal, were next day able to cross to the southern bank.

Their road was now clear before them so far as human foes were concerned. They struck into the wild Adirondack region part of which is even now little known, and 'after a journey of twelve days of excessive hardship, emerged from the woods within six miles of the point for which, without chart or compass, Sammons had laid his course.' Most of the way they had to live on roots and herbs. They used their hats for shoes; but these were worn out before the journey was ended. The prisoners, for greater security, seem to have been kept barefooted; and Mr. Stone notes that these two were 'destitute of pantaloons,' which had perhaps been laid aside with a view to swimming. When at last they arrived at Schenectady, more like beasts than men, almost naked, with swollen feet and gaunt, hairy faces, the people were frightened at the sight of them; and a lady who had known Frederick in happier days, fainted away as she came up to grasp his hand.

Such were the experiences of men who desired nothing but leave to live and work in peace. Peril and adventure enough for a lifetime was often thus crowded into a week. When quieter days came, what a long breath of relief must these stout hearts have drawn, looking back on the troubled scenes of an unnatural war, as from the smooth water Frederick Sammons looked back on the raging rapids of the St. Lawrence!

It may be mentioned that after the escape of Sammons and MacMullen, the prisoners on the island were more closely guarded, their quarters being surrounded by palisades, through which they were not allowed to pass without per-

mission. A number of them, with a jack-knife for their only tool, dug a subterranean passage beneath the barrier, got out at night, lashed some logs together, and on this raft made the passage of the rapids, and succeeded in reaching home through the woods. Yet, after all, these gallant fellows might have spared their labour and suffering; for in a month or two, peace was made between England and America, and their liberty could no longer have been withheld from them.



CHAPTER IX.

THE WHITE SAVAGES.



THE virtues and achievements of our heroes must not conceal from us their shortcomings, nor let us forget the crimes into which ignorance and recklessness are always too ready to fall. The white men who led the van of English emigration and first came into contact with the Indians, were seldom the best teachers of civilisation. Trappers, rangers, traders, farmers, borderers generally, they were mostly wild, adven-

turous spirits who had moved westward to escape the uncongenial restraints and refinements of life in the older districts ; some of them, indeed, were worse characters, outlawed from society by their crimes. Such men would be more likely to fall more or less into the savage state than to win the red men over to the advantages of their own race, and such, in fact, was the common result.

In the solitude and independence of their forest home, the backwoodsmen soon learned to imitate, even while hating them, the habits, appearance, and ways of thought of the old inhabi-

tants. The white hunters were on the average stronger men ; they were commonly better shots than the Indians, and though they seldom attained to that keenness of observation which seems an instinct in the savage, they were scarcely less at home in the woods. Many of the features of Indian character became a second nature to not a few of them, and too often they grew to be as men who had never 'been where bells have knolled to church.' Such characters as Cooper's 'Leather-stocking' seem a highly-idealized and softened representation of a class who were certainly useful in their generation and make very picturesque figures in fiction, but whom some of us would not have found very agreeable acquaintances in real life. On the other hand, they would probably have looked down on most of us as useless, effeminate, ignorant, and altogether contemptible members of creation. Unlike Cooper's large-minded hero, these worthies were wont to regard all gifts but their own with the utmost scorn.

To get an idea of the outer man of one of these amphibious mortals, half savage, half civilised, we cannot do better than go back to Cooper's portrait. In his youth the novelist lived among such men, and here he is drawing from life :—' He was tall and so meagre as to make him seem above even the six feet that he actually stood in his stockings. On his head, which was thinly covered with lank sandy hair, he wore a cap made of foxskin. . . . His face was skinny and thin almost to emaciation, but yet bore no signs of disease ; on the contrary, it had every indication of the most robust and enduring health. The cold and the exposure had together given it a colour of uniform red ; his grey eyes were glancing under a pair of shaggy brows that overhung them in long hairs of grey mingled with their natural hue ; his scraggy neck was bare and burnt to the same tint with his face, though a small part of a shirt collar, made of the country check, was to be seen above the over-dress he

wore. A kind of coat made of dressed deerskin with the hair on was belted close to his lank body by a girdle of coloured worsted. On his feet were deerskin moccasins, ornamented with porcupine quills, after the manner of the Indians, and his limbs were guarded with long leggings of the same material as the moccasins, which, gartering over the knees of his tarnished buckskin breeches, had obtained for him among the settlers the nickname of Leather-stocking, notwithstanding his legs were protected beneath, in winter, by thick garments of woollen, duly made of good blue yarn. Over his left shoulder was hung a belt of deerskin, from which depended an enormous ox-horn, so thinly scraped as to discover the dark powder that it contained. The larger end was fitted ingeniously and securely with a wooden bottom, and the other was stopped tight by a little plug.'

The white men often found it convenient to adopt the Indian costume, in whole or in part, and sometimes went the length of disguising themselves horribly with paint. The young dandies of the backwoods might even be seen attending places of worship arrayed in Indian fashion, not to the edification of the young ladies of the congregation, we are told. The change went deeper than the outside. They became accustomed not only to flaunt their breechcloths and leggings, but to hang reeking scalps at their belts, and to pride themselves on pouches and saddles made out of the tanned skin of their detested enemies.

The worst lesson which the red men taught these neighbours was to gratify their fierce and revengeful passions with a cruelty sometimes equal to or surpassing that of the Indians themselves. They learned contempt of pity as well as of pain, and the whole sad history of the American borders is tainted by stories of lawless bloodthirstiness that as often call for a blush as a tear. It is scarcely, indeed, to be expected that these rough and ignorant pioneers could have shown much Christian

charity towards their constant enemies, when we find the pious Puritans of New England and the strict Presbyterians of Pennsylvania treating them as heathen, who were to be rooted out of the land with all the rigour of the Old Testament dispensation. The Indians had few real friends among the newcomers into their own country. There were two sects only, the Quakers and the Moravians, who treated them fairly and kindly. This policy was in fact pursued so consistently by the Quakers, that at one time it had almost resulted in a civil war.

It is well known that Pennsylvania was originally settled under more happy auspices than in the case of most of the American colonies. Penn and his followers were sincere lovers of peace. The Delaware Indians whom they found in possession of the land were in no state to make war. This tribe had been recently reduced to dependence by the Five Nations, had been forced to assume the name of *women* as a mark of humiliation, and had been forbidden by the conquerors the use of arms, the second nature of the Indian. So for a time all went well between them and their new neighbours, and the treaty entered into by the two parties has been characterized as the only agreement of the kind made without an oath, and the only one not broken.

But the relations of the two races soon changed for the worse. The western frontiers became peopled by a race of bold and rude pioneers, of a very different temper from the scrupulously philanthropic Society of Friends. The Delawares, as they in a measure recovered their independence and warlike spirit, found themselves pushed farther and farther inland by the encroaching settlers. On either side of them the Shawnees and the Wyandots, or Hurons, set the example of a keen opposition to the strangers. Thus in little more than half a

century this district gained an evil notoriety for violence and bloodshed.

The Quakers chiefly lived in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia and the eastern parts of Pennsylvania. For a long time they had the ascendancy in the government of the State, and, true to their principles, were very loth to take part in the Indian wars, or even to provide the exposed frontiers with the necessary means for defence. On the other hand, the western settlers, men of different religious notions, or no religious notions at all, being daily and hourly in danger from the barbarities of the Indians, grew very bitter against their own countrymen, who, as they declared, by talking of peace to cruel savages, only encouraged them to robbery and murder.

At the time of the Pontiac War, when during a few months two thousand persons are said to have been killed or taken prisoners along the English borders, there was naturally a very excited state of feeling among the Pennsylvanian pioneers that had been driven from their homes, or remained at them in peril of their lives. As the State Government was so backward in protecting them and avenging their injuries, they took the matter into their own hands, and in a fit of indiscriminate fury fell upon the nearest victims, whose crime and its evidence consisted of little more than their colour.

At a place called Conestoga there was a small village of Indians who had partially undergone the process of civilisation, or degradation, as it should rather be called. They were a remnant of the once formidable Susquehannah tribe, that to Captain John Smith had seemed very sons of Anak; but now, surrounded by the white settlers and engaged in peaceful occupations, they were almost as harmless as the gipsies among ourselves or the degenerate Indians who in our own day live by making baskets, brooms, and mats, or peddling curiosities to strangers. No one could look on them as formidable

enemies, but they were accused of giving information and assistance to their kinsmen in arms. When such fierce passions were let loose, to be accused was to be condemned. A number of men, chiefly belonging to a place in the neighbourhood named Paxton, rode to the Indian village, made a sudden attack, if attack it could be called where there was no question of resistance, plundered and burned the wretched cabins, and killed the few Indians who were found in them.

This deed they scarcely took the trouble to conceal, and few of the white people were found to blame it very severely. As the same gang were said to be preparing to kill the rest of the Conestoga Indians, the Sheriff of Lancaster humanely gathered them together, and lodged them in the workhouse for safety. But the 'Paxton boys,' as the murderers were termed, were not to be thus balked. Fifty in number, armed to the teeth, they rode to Lancaster, arrived there on Sunday when the people were at church, forced their way into the workhouse, and butchered the whole of the Indians, men, women, and children, who could only attempt feebly to defend themselves with billets of firewood.

In the state of public feeling it was hopeless to attempt to bring these criminals to justice. It was all the Government could do to maintain itself against them, and they were soon threatening a wholesale massacre of the Christian Indians who had been converted by the Moravian missionaries. The Provincial Assembly had already interfered to have a fair inquiry into the charges made against these people. They were ordered to be disarmed and brought—for protection as well as trial—to Philadelphia. To the number of a hundred and forty, amid the insults and threats of the rabble, they had been conducted to the barracks, where the soldiers would not admit them, and they had to remain half the day in the public square, surrounded by a

furious mob, who were scarcely to be restrained from attacking them.

The poor people were at last taken to an island some miles from the town. But even here they seemed not safe. News came of the massacres at Conestoga and Lancaster; and in the agitated state of the province, it was thought well to send these Indians away to the older settlements, where public opinion would not be so fierce against them, and they might be under the protection of regular troops. It was even proposed to ship them for England. In bitterly cold weather, the shivering exiles once more took up their pilgrimage, and went as far as New Jersey, where the authorities both of that State and of New York forbade their coming farther. What were they to do? The Paxton boys were not satisfied with what they had done. A small army of kindred spirits had assembled, and were marching upon the capital of Pennsylvania. All there was alarm and confusion, for the forces of the rioters were much exaggerated by rumour, and many of the citizens openly sympathized with them. Some time before, a cart, full of the mangled corpses of white people killed on the frontier, had been paraded through the streets, to excite the populace, many of whom bore already no good-will towards the Quaker aristocracy.

But the party in power were not to be terrified or moved from the stand which justice and humanity bid them make against popular passion. The Moravian Indians were again received into their charge. No other State would give them an asylum; and, after being marched to and fro, the unfortunate band had been brought back to Philadelphia under an escort of Highlanders, who, having begun by discharging their duty with roughness and contempt, were won over by the behaviour of these Indians to become their friends as well as protectors.

The Paxton rioters continued to advance upon the city,

and energetic preparations for defence were made, the great Dr. Franklin taking a prominent part. A Quaker meeting-house was turned into a guard-house, and now, in such a cause, many broad-brimmed Friends among the rest handled a musket, awkwardly enough, for the first and last time in their lives. So unserviceable were these raw soldiers likely to be, that, on a sudden alarm, they had almost opened fire on their own men! We may smile at such a sudden conversion to martial principles, but there is something truly heroic in this arming of people who thought it wrong to fight for their own lives and property. The stricter of the Quakers still scrupled to fight, but showed their courage by repairing to the barracks where the Indians were guarded by a small party of soldiers. The shops were shut; barricades were thrown up, cannons planted in the streets; and on the whole—though the thunder of the cannon startled their unaccustomed ears—none of the inhabitants showed so much calmness as the threatened Indians when it was announced that the assailants were at hand.

Fortunately the collision was avoided. The Paxton men halted outside of the city, and entered into terms. Seeing the unexpectedly firm front shown to them, they thought better of their designs, and were persuaded to withdraw upon a promise that their complaints should be attended to. Philadelphia was thus preserved from a bloody and unnatural combat in the streets which had been dedicated to peace. It was, however, a year before the Moravian Indians could be trusted out of the barracks in which, for their safety, they were confined. Many of them died of smallpox. At last they were able to establish themselves, with their missionaries, in another part of the country, and for a time were left unmolested. But the story of the massacre of Gnadenhutten, which is elsewhere related, shows that the fury of the Paxton

boys' was no solitary fit of madness, such as has at times broken out among the most civilised people.

In a narrative such as that of the dealings between the white and the red men, which is forced to dwell so much on deeds of blood, it is refreshing to come upon any episode of justice and humanity. There is such a story to be told of three men who showed themselves more truly brave than any of those fierce hunters and warriors, since to fight bravely for life, for hatred, for revenge, is an easy thing compared with the courage which these men have got little enough fame for exhibiting. Three strange Indians had been reported lurking in a neighbourhood where the white people were greatly excited about some murders that had been committed not far off. A small party of mounted men, under Alexander McConnell, went out to hunt for these suspected characters. They were tracked to an island, and easily made prisoners, giving up their arms without resistance. The captors were for killing them on the spot, but McConnell would not allow it. Declaring that the Indians should have a fair trial according to law, he escorted them to the county jail at a small town called New Philadelphia.

As soon as the news of this spread, the people began to think of wreaking their anger on these victims. A body of forty armed men assembled and marched for the jail, intending to dispose of the Indians without waiting for the formalities of the law. Most of the citizens were quite in sympathy with this object; only three men were found to oppose them. These were Henry Laffer, the sheriff who had the custody of the prisoners, McConnell who had arrested them, and a lawyer named Wright, who happened to come to the town on business, and learning what was on foot, indignantly protested that the community must not be disgraced by such a lawless outrage.

The friends of law and justice met the band of murderers at the tavern, where they stopped for refreshments, and warmly remonstrated with them on what they were about to do. Some of the men, now thinking better of it, backed out of the business. Most of them, however, persisted in their design, and made for the jail with their guns loaded. But the three honest men were there first. They had taken a short cut, and when the crew of murderers came to the door, they found Laffer, McConnell, and Wright posted before it. The whole three had no arms among them but an old broadsword and a pistol, with which they showed a firm front, and declared that nobody should touch the prisoners without overpowering them. Now it was the assailants' turn to argue without effect. The captain grew angry, warned the three to get out of the way, and at last ordered his followers to fire. But the most ruffianly of them had not courage to pull a trigger against the men who were so manfully doing their duty. Some more began to drop off from the party. The rest returned to the tavern to screw up their courage with more whiskey.

But even whiskey could not inspire them to carry out their purpose. The three heroes, they were nothing less, still stood undauntedly on guard, while none of their fellow-citizens who looked on had the spirit to interfere. The company of armed men, *ten times* their number, kept threatening to shoot them; the champions of the law would not budge a step. At last their resolution, if not their one sword and pistol, won the day. The would-be murderers slunk off, and the poor prisoners, who all the while must have been woefully dismayed within the walls of the jail, were safe for the present.

Some time afterwards they were discharged, nothing having been proved against them. But however innocent they might have been, they owed their lives only to Laffer, McConnell, and Wright. All honour then to these good men, who, nobler

than Horatius Coeles and his comrades, threw their lives into the breach against the maddened passions of their countrymen! To have been one of that gallant three is a prouder distinction than to be known as the mightiest fighter who ever showed the Indians how the white men could master them at their own weapons and in their own crimes.

This affair took place so late as 1812. If it was thus difficult to secure justice for the Indians then, how must it have been in the early days of the settlement? Seldom was a white man punished by law for killing an Indian.¹ Not that the Indians felt themselves much aggrieved by this. They had a law of their own; the friends or kinsmen of the dead took satisfaction by killing some one in retaliation—if possible the guilty party, if not, the first white man they could fall in with, who might be wholly innocent and actuated by the most friendly intentions towards their race. Thus the reign of mutual hatred and lawless revenge was long kept up, some new injury on one side or the other coming again and again to revive it. Both races may well be pitied in these painful relations, but the white men are most to blame, who knew a better law and yet practised the worse one.

Cunning as the red man was in the arts of slaughter in his natural state, he was simple enough in all that related to gain and barter. This simplicity did not fail to be taken advantage of, even by those who made a show of fair dealing. As, for instance, it was no exceptional case when the Indians once undertook to sell as much land as could be covered by an ox hide, that the settlers, taking a hint from a classical

¹ John Johnson says in his *Recollections* that in an experience of fifty-three years of Ohio, he had only known one instance of such an execution, though many of the crime.

story, cut the hide into thin strips, and claimed all that could be surrounded by them. Then there was the celebrated 'walking purchase.' The agreement here was to part with a district, the boundary of which was to extend as far as a man could walk in a day and a half. The purchasers found it worth while to put good pedestrians in training for the performance of the stipulated feat, and to lay out a smooth road for them to walk on as for a wager, a notion which of course had never entered the heads of the sellers. It is no wonder if an Indian who arrived at one of the settlements to sell his furs on a Sunday, and was invited by the shrewd but pious merchant to go with him to church instead of entering at once upon business, came away with the idea that the ceremony where the man in black had spoken so earnestly was nothing but a meeting where the white people consulted how they might best cheat the poor Indians!

If respectable dealers and church members were too ready to forget their religious duties in their 'business principles,' the fur traders who scoured the Indian country became a proverb for rapacity as well as audacity. Often they were the very worst of characters, with the very best of reasons for preferring savage to civilised society; but the Indians had scarcely more chance of being fairly dealt with when the trader was a young man making one or two voyages from the older settlements to obtain means for setting himself up in life, or perhaps from the mere love of roving and adventure. This career was often entered upon by lads in their teens.

When the ice had melted in spring, the trader launched his birch canoe, loaded with guns, ammunition, tools, kettles, fish-hooks, blankets, coarse and gaily-coloured cloth, tobacco, trinkets, and the like. Artificial beads, vermilion, and looking-glasses were good wares to tempt the dusky dandies, and the trader might also carry 'a small quantity of soap,' as

Baron La Hontan tells us without meaning any sly pleasantry. A part of the cargo seldom failed to be kegs of rum or whiskey, the 'English milk,' which wrought such havoc with the body and soul of the red man. The owner of this venture would generally have at least one companion; the larger dealers might employ several servants.

For months they remained in the Indian country, exploring the rivers which were its only roads, now labouring for hundreds of miles against a mighty stream, now carrying their canoes and cargoes across the portages from one creek to another, exposed to the sun by day and the dews by night, till, if all went well, they came back, brown and hearty, with their goods exchanged for packs of skins—deer, beaver, otter, martin, musk-rat, pole-cat, wolf, buffalo, according to the region in which their dealing had been. Then, if they were regular old traders, the chance would be that they never rested till all the proceeds of their toil had been squandered in folly and brutal dissipation. But prudent youths, who had taken up this course with a view to marriage, would profit by their good luck to extend their operations next season; and it might well happen that a young fellow of twenty-one had in two or three such trips gained enough to set him up in some line of business more favourable to domestic felicity. It was more probably the case that he had acquired habits, not to speak of an Indian wife in half a dozen tribes, which would prevent him from ever settling down in a quiet, domestic way.

As the country became better known, a string of pack-horses might be substituted for the canoe, and no tribe would be left unvisited. It was an occupation not less profitable than dangerous if the trader had courage to penetrate far into the woods where competition was unknown, unless in the article of scalps. He generally began business by

dosing his customers with drugged or watered rum, and soon brought them into a state in which they were to be persuaded that the white man's fist weighed as many pounds as he pleased. Even when they were sober, they were easily imposed upon by false scales and bad goods. Rum was almost always part of the price, and the negotiation was concluded by a general orgy, before entering upon which it was well if the Indians had sense enough to give up their arms for the nonce, since, as long as the liquor lasted, they became so many maniacs, and even when they were unarmed, the fit of drunken fury scarcely passed away without serious accident.

These 'cute traders did not always get the best of it. Such a one once sold some gunpowder to an Indian, telling him it was a grain which would grow, and filling him with the hopes of being able to deal extensively in this indispensable commodity, and becoming rich beyond the dreams of native avarice. In the spring he carefully prepared his ground, and sowed the precious seed; but he had to wait a long time before any sprouts appeared. He made no complaint, but kept the trick in mind when the trader had forgotten it. Then he managed to get credit from this trader to a considerable amount; and when the debt was to be settled, he said gravely, '*Me pay you when my gunpowder grow.*' So, at least, goes the story. But, generally, the Indian who found himself outwitted had no redress but in his own strong arm. The too shrewd trader had always to risk his scalp for his gains, and the worst of it was, that his rascally blood might provoke the death of many better men.

It must be remembered that if the one race had a superior talent for cheating, the other held robbing to be little short of a virtue. Something is to be said for



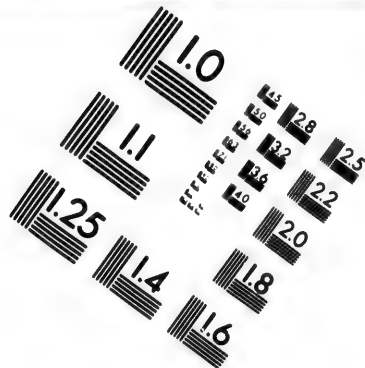
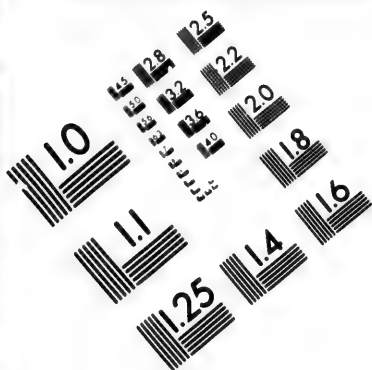
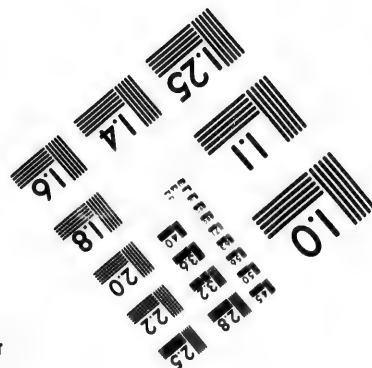
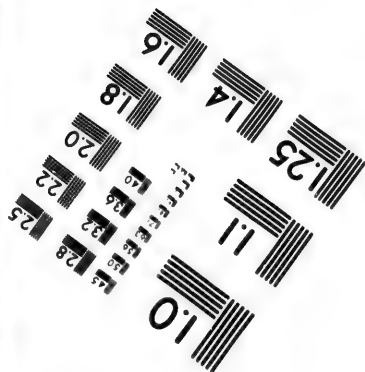
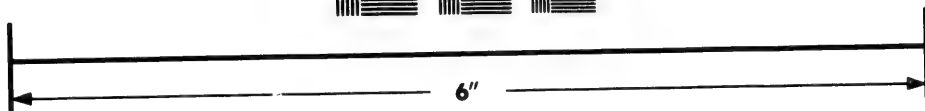
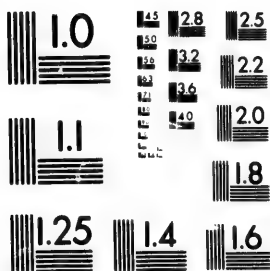


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white men, who might be willing enough to live peaceably, but were constantly driven to taking the law into their own hands against their unpleasant neighbours. An Indian, gleaming with weapons and war paint, and able to take himself a couple of hundred miles off on the horse which he had stolen from you, was not usually a fit subject for a constable's warrant, and could not readily be held to bail. So, even to good men exasperated by such injuries, the 'wild justice of revenge' often appeared a necessity.

Among the early settlers themselves, indeed, there was very little law except of the kind administered by 'Judge Lynch.' The ordinary vulgar crimes could not flourish among a people who had next to nothing to steal, and did not scruple to take the shortest way of punishing offences. Any person who made himself obnoxious to the community was likely to be subjected to a process known as 'hating out,' the nature of which may be guessed at; and it requires little explanation to understand how serious a matter it was to be sent to Coventry in these remote regions, where people depended so much on each other's help and friendship. If stronger measures seemed to be called for, the neighbours of the culprit thought very little of tying him up to a tree, and giving him what they called a 'laced jacket' with hickory sticks. The chief disputes were about the title to land, and these were often settled in this way, not by the party which had the best right, but that which had the might on its side.

In such a state of things, lawyers were not likely to get much employment. Surveyors were the first professional men who made their appearance in the backwoods; then colonels and majors of militia flourished before much need

was felt for ministers and magistrates. As for doctors, every mother of a family was one, with all the woods round her cabin for an apothecary's shop; and few men could pass through the accidents of such a life without picking up enough of surgery to serve their turn in the case of most injuries. To tell the truth, too, these people, shrewd as they showed themselves in so many ways, were not always above a belief in witchcraft; they had charms for the cure of burns and toothaches, and were apt to suspect the diseases of cattle to be the doing of some ugly old woman who bore a grudge against them.

As soon as the settlers had acquired property, and found it becoming valuable, they began to see the necessity of some regular administration of justice, and to establish courts at which it was dispensed in a rough and ready form. The judges were chosen not so much for their knowledge of law, as for honesty, common sense, and general popularity; it was also as well for them to be men of muscle, since on occasion they might have to throw off their coats and take an active part in 'keeping the peace.' A certain distinguished Solon of Kentucky was in the habit of making his circuits on foot, clad in hunter's dress, and carrying the good rifle with which he was as skilful as at expounding the law.

The first courts were held in taverns or log cabins. Perhaps the jury retired to deliberate in a grove of trees or another hut close by. At one of these forest assizes, it is recorded that no Testament could be found to swear in the jury, and the oath was administered upon a volume of the *Arabian Nights* which looked like one.

The punishments inflicted were seldom severe. Imprisonment was not much in favour, when the nearest jail might be fifty miles off, and nobody cared to take the trouble of escorting the prisoner so far. Besides, the jails, which were often nothing

but a hut or an old blockhouse, were so insecure that those confined in them were as likely to escape as not; more than not if they happened to be charged with any crime against the Indians. The offenders themselves generally preferred to get their punishment in a shorter and sharper way and have done with it. If they could not pay so many dollars by way of fine, they were sentenced to so many lashes. The sentence was inflicted forthwith. The culprit was tied up to a tree, after perhaps being allowed a drink of whiskey to keep up his spirits, and the sheriff with his own hands inflicted the lashes on his bare back, then turned him loose again to join his jeering neighbours, and to return home, if he liked, a wiser and a better man.

We read of some curious punishments inflicted by these courts. For instance, a thief was sentenced to receive ten lashes, or to sit on a pony and be led through the village by his wife, who at every house was to proclaim, 'This is Brannon who stole the greatcoat, handkerchief, and shirt.' The fellow cared more for his skin than for his shame, so he chose the latter alternative, and the ceremony was duly performed. In another township it was ordered that every person found drunk should dig a stump out of the streets, where the trees had been felled and the roots left to rot, or till the inhabitants had time to pull them up. The result of this ordinance is said to have been a marked improvement both in the appearance of the town and the morals of the people.

Here is an amusing scene which gives us some idea of the free-and-easy style of legal proceedings in the backwoods:— 'The court was held on this occasion in a log tavern, and an adjoining log stable was used as a jail, the stalls answering as cells for the prisoners. Judge T. was on the bench, and in the exercise of his judicial functions, severely reprimanded two young lawyers who had got into a personal dispute. A huge

herculean backwoodsman, attired in a red flannel shirt, stood among the auditors in the apartment which served the double purpose of court and bar room. He was much pleased at the judge's lecture, having himself been *practising at another bar*, and hallooed out to his worship, who happened to be cross-eyed, in the midst of his harangue, "Give it to 'em, old Gimlet-eyes!"

"Who is that?" demanded the judge. He of the flannel shirt, proud of being thus noticed, stepped out from among the rest, and drawing himself up to his full height, vociferated, "It's this 'ere old hoss!"

'The judge, who to this day never failed of a pungent repartee when occasion required, called out in a peculiarly dry nasal tone, "Sheriff, take that *old hoss*, put him in the *stable*, and see that he is *not stolen* before morning."

If the operation of the laws was generally mild, the same thing cannot always be said of those excited mobs which have been too often a reproach to American society. 'That worst of tyrants, a usurping crowd,' when it took the law into its own hands, was here noted for outbursts of brutal cruelty, called forth as well by differences of political opinion as by actual crimes against society. It is doubtful if any of the 'effete despotisms of Europe' has during the last century made use of a more barbarous punishment than tarring and feathering, which not only made the victim of popular passion a hideous object of disgrace, but often endangered his health and his life. Judge Lynch is not an institution for a civilised nation to be proud of.

We must, however, bear in mind the circumstances which gave rise to these irregular ways of administering justice. Sometimes murderers, robbers, and swindlers of all shades would gather like birds of a feather into some unsettled district which offered itself as a 'Rogue's Harbour,' till such

characters actually formed the stronger part of the community, and forced a reign of lawless terror upon their well-disposed neighbours. After perhaps putting up with this state of things till life seemed no longer worth having, the honest citizens would make a vigorous attempt to restore order. A Vigilance Committee or Society of 'Regulators' would be secretly formed for taking steps for purging the place of the evil humours which had gathered to such a head. Then, if the rogues did not profit by one or two severe examples, both sides would go to arms; and more than once the reign of justice has been inaugurated by a desperate battle fought in the streets of some rising town. But before things came to such a pass, the district may be said to have ceased to belong to the backwoods.

It was not likely to be long before regular lawyers found work enough cut out for them in the new settlements. Like wasps upon a peach, swarms of greedy 'land jobbers' soon came down upon the rich lands cleared by the sturdy arms of the pioneers. The unscrupulous shrewdness of these speculators, the roving habits of the early colonists, their simple contempt for legal forms, and, perhaps as much as any other cause, the bungling documents of amateur conveyancers, did not fail to produce a thick crop of disputes as to ownership, which, when they might no longer be settled offhand and by force, brought plenty of grist to the law's mill. The first few years of the proceedings in the backwoods' courts would prove that civilisation has its own crimes, less hideous, it may be, yet not less hateful than those of savagedom.

CHAPTER X.

LEWIS WETZEL, THE INDIAN-KILLER.



A TYPICAL specimen of the semi-savage borderers is found in Lewis Wetzel, a man who was a famous and popular character in his day, but whose exploits have been judged very differently from different points of view. The moralist and historian, writing in the calm security of his study, is often inclined to call out upon him for a brutal murderer; but to the

neighbours of the man himself, exposed as they were to the constant remembrance and dread of Indian atrocity, this great slayer of redskins seemed a hero of the purest water. If we judge him according to his lights, his opportunities, and the circumstances of the time, we shall perhaps be able neither wholly to praise, nor yet utterly to condemn his conduct.

One thing is certain, that few would have cared to condemn Lewis Wetzel to his face. His appearance is described as most formidable. He was thick-set, but not remarkably tall.

His dark complexion was deeply marked with the smallpox. He had intensely black eyes, wild and eager, and when he was angry, glowing like those of a wild beast. His hair was jet black, and so long that when combed out it fell below his knees. Any Shawnee or Delaware brave would have been a proud man for life, if he could but have adorned his leggings with those raven locks; the grizzly bear's claws or the buffalo's horns would not have been counted a nobler decoration.

The Wetzels, a German family, were among the earliest settlers on Wheeling Creek. There were four or five boys of them, who grew up stout, hardy fellows, upon a plain but plentiful diet, and, without much trouble from the three R's, were schooled by the rough training of the forest to play the man at an age when our youth have barely learned to read of their adventures. Lewis Wetzel was thirteen, when one day, as he was lounging in front of his father's cabin, he saw the muzzle of a gun pointed at his heart from behind an outhouse. He drew back, yet not so quickly but that the shot tore across his breast, grazing the bone. The lurking Indians leaped out of their cover, seized him and his brother Jacob, and carried them off, with whatever plunder they could lay their hands on.

For two days the young prisoners were hurried away from home, Lewis suffering much from his wound, but not daring to complain, lest he should be knocked on the head forthwith. On the second night, he and his brother stole away from their sleeping guards. But before they had gone far, they found it hard work to trudge along barefoot, and Lewis had the hardihood to go back to the Indians' camp, and help himself to a couple of pairs of moccasins. As they slept so soundly, he actually returned a second time to get his father's gun from them. Then the boys set out homewards. The

Indians chased them on horseback, but they succeeded in hiding themselves till the enemy were out of the way, and reaching the Ohio, made a raft by lashing logs together, on which they crossed the river, and got home safely. This is the first recorded exploit of the future hero of the frontiers.

Another brother was taken prisoner twice, but each time contrived to escape. A third had also been in the hands of the Indians. Thus early did these lads get a taste of savage cruelty; and before all of them had grown up to manhood, they had other reasons for their bitter hatred to the very name of Indian. Their father was murdered by some prowling party—shot in a canoe, which he had just strength left to paddle to the shore, where a stone still marks the place of his death. Over this grave his sons vowed lifelong vengeance against the whole Indian race. Faithfully and fearfully was that vow kept. Henceforth, where a red man was concerned, they knew neither truce nor pity, nor even good faith.

Lewis Wetzel soon became known as one of the most active and daring rangers of the woods. Here now was his home, and his business in life was as much to kill Indians as to gain his livelihood. He hunted them like wild beasts; and such were his keenness and sagacity, that though they returned his hatred with interest, he came safe out of a hundred encounters, often against heavy odds, and seldom failed to make the enemy pay dearly for a sight of him.

The most celebrated of these encounters reminds us of the old classical story of the Horatii and Curiatii. He was once chased by four Indians, loading as he ran—an accomplishment of his in which the red men do not seem to have been able to imitate him, even if, on this occasion, they had not left behind their guns to make more haste, never doubting but to be a match for him with their toma-

hawks. When they had run some way, and one of the pursuers was close upon him, Wetzel turned round and shot him. On he sped again till the second Indian had come so near that when Wetzel faced him he seized the rifle and twisted it upwards. A hasty struggle took place; every moment was precious. But before the other Indians arrived to the help of their comrade, Wetzel had managed to twist the muzzle against his adversary's breast, and pulled the trigger, quick as thought, without raising the butt to his shoulder. Thus released, he was off again, and the two survivors showed themselves wisely cautious about approaching him. As often as he halted, they dodged behind trees; but catching one of them behind a small trunk, too thin to cover his whole body, the sharp-eyed ranger put him also *hors de combat* with a shot through his thigh. Then the fourth Indian saw good to give up the chase, and, in his turn, ran for his life.

Many were such tales told by the frontier men of Lewis Wetzel's prowess. Once he joined a party which set out to chastise a body of marauding Indians. Some of the settlers who stayed at home had subscribed to offer a reward of a hundred dollars for the first Indian scalp, and there were several besides Wetzel who hoped to win this prize—a little fortune in the backwoods. But when they drew near the enemy's camp, the latter were found to be too strong for them. A retreat was determined upon, and all turned their backs except Wetzel, who said he had come out to hunt Indians, and did not mean to go home like a fool, with his finger in his mouth. The rest might do as they pleased; he would take a scalp.

In vain his comrades talked to him of the danger. They were obliged to leave him alone in the forest. Cautiously he prowled about, hoping to fall in with a straggling party from

the Indian force. At night he durst not light a fire for fear of drawing them upon him. He was obliged to keep himself warm by making what was called a 'coal pit.' He dug a hole in the ground, filled it with a slow fire made of strips of oak bark off a dead tree, and covered it up again, leaving one or two air-holes into which he could blow if the smouldering mass required stirring up. Then on the top he spread a layer of bark or branches, and squatted down, with the 'coal pit' between his legs, and his blanket drawn over his head. In this position a hunter could make shift to sleep comfortably enough, with his ears wide awake, and his arms in his hand, ready at the slightest alarm.

Next day he saw a smoke, and, thus guided, made his way to a camp, where two Indians had carelessly left their kettle and blankets beside a burning fire while they were hunting. Wetzel hid himself in the bushes. By and by came the Indians, who sat down to supper, and began to sing and joke together with roars of laughter, little dreaming whose eyes were watching them. Wetzel expected to kill them both as soon as they should be asleep. He was much disappointed to see one of them go off with his rifle and a burning brand—to shoot deer, probably. He did not come back all night; and when the birds began to chirp, announcing that the dawn was at hand, Wetzel coolly stabbed the other Indian in his sleep, took home the scalp, and received the reward.

Another time he came upon four Indians sleeping, and killed three of them by the dim flicker of their fire, as deliberately as if they had been so many snakes. To his disgust, the fourth woke up in time to escape him. An enthusiastic biographer speaks of this brave action with the warmest admiration, but surely we can imagine braver deeds!

Again, one stormy evening, he took shelter in the loft of a deserted cabin. As he was laying himself out to spend a

comfortable evening, six Indians arrived, and began to make the same preparations in the room below. Wetzel fully expected to be discovered before long; he meant to leap among them with his knife and make a dash for the door. But, luckily, the savages did not smell the blood of an Englishman; and when they had eaten a hearty supper, they all fell asleep. Then he slipped down from the loft, cautiously picked his way among the sleeping bodies, and gained the outside without rousing any of them. Most men would have been content with such an escape, and would have hastened to put as many miles as possible between them and this nest of hornets. But that was not Wetzel's way. He hid himself behind a log in front of the cabin, and waited patiently all night, as a hunter sure of game. 'At early dawn a tall savage stepped from the door, and stretching up both hands in a long, hearty yawn, seemed to draw in new life from the pure, invigorating atmosphere. In an instant Wetzel had his finger upon the trigger, and the next moment the Indian fell heavily to the ground, his life's blood gushing upon the young grass, brilliant with the morning dewdrops.' Then the daring woodsman, to whom Indian blood was the most beautiful thing in the world, ran away, confiding in his powers, with this short start, to leave the slain man's comrades far behind.

While still a young man, Wetzel joined the army, but, as may be imagined, found the restraints of discipline and obedience very little to his mind. He was then employed as a scout, and so long as his duty was to lead the soldiers to the enemy, no fault could be found with him. It was another matter, however, when General Harmer, his commander, wishing to treat of peace with the Indians, ordered a truce to be observed. Generals and governors might make peace, but Wetzel, who fought for his own hand, had little thought of obeying any power but his thirst for revenge. So he took

the opportunity of killing, or, in plain English, murdering an Indian who was coming to the quarters of the army on faith of the truce.

The scout made no secret of what he had done ; he never could be made to see that there was any harm in killing an Indian under any circumstances, and there were plenty of his fellows who entirely agreed with him. The Indians did not keep faith with them, and why should they set a better example ? But, naturally, General Harmer took a different view of the matter. Angry at this disregard of his orders, and the threatened failure of the negotiations that were going on, he had Wetzel seized and confined in irons. Surprised and indignant, the prisoner found himself like to be hanged for a crime which, in his eyes, was nothing but a virtue. Little had he ever thought to have to do with the law, and its forms and scruples were as strange to him as the rules of politeness or the doctrines of religion. Requesting an interview with the general, he seriously proposed that, if he must be punished, he should be given up to the Indians, the kinsmen of his victim. Let them stand in a circle with their weapons, set him in the middle with a tomahawk only, and he asked no better than to be allowed to make a fair fight for it.

Of course the matter could not be settled thus, and in a few days the bold backwoodsman began to find himself in a miserable plight. To a man like him, accustomed to the freedom of the woods, confinement was as bad as death. He declared that his health would give way if he could not take some exercise. The general took pity on him, and ordered that his fetters should be taken off, and that he should have leave to walk in the precincts of the fort, still handcuffed, however, and under a guard.

As soon as he was out of the gate, Wetzel, eagerly sniffing

the fresh air, began to caper about like a dog or a colt let loose. He would run a few yards, then turn back; next time he ran a little farther, but came back again to join his guards, to start away once more, each time making greater and greater trials of their vigilance. They laughed good-naturedly at his antics, which seemed natural enough in the poor fellow's case. But they did not laugh when, having taken a still longer tether, he at last bounded off in good earnest, and was almost out of shot before they saw that he was bent on escape. Away they went in pursuit, but, handcuffed as he was, he outstripped them, and gained the shelter of the woods which he knew and loved so well. Here it was not easy to catch him, though the revengeful Indians were turned on his trail like hounds after a fox. He gained a dense thicket, and squeezed himself under a fallen tree. As he lay thus hidden, he heard the Indians shouting all round him, and even passing over his head; and his heart beat so violently that he fancied their quick ears must catch its thumping.

When at nightfall they had drawn off, and all was quiet, he left his cover to steal down to the river bank. He had a friend on the other side to whom he might trust himself; but how was he to cross the wide and strong stream of the Ohio? He could not find a canoe. With his hands fastened as they were, he could not make a raft. There was nothing for it but to swim. So, handcuffs and all, he plunged into the river, and by swimming on his back contrived at last to gain the other side, but in a state of such exhaustion that for a time he lay on the shore without being able to rise. He reached his friend's cabin, and was not disappointed of a friendly reception. A file soon rid him of his fetters. Then he was off to the woods of Kentucky, set up in life again with a gun and a blanket, which was all such a man required in the way of furniture and stock-in-trade.

After this he took it for granted that all danger was past, and resumed his old occupations of hunting and scouting. He showed himself openly at races, shooting matches, and wrestling bouts, rightly counting on the sympathy of the people. He was reckoning, however, without General Harmer, who determined to have him, and offered a large reward for his capture. But no reward would tempt any Kentuckian to lay hands on the famous Indian-slayer; he was as safe here as Rob Roy was among his clansmen, or Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest. More than once parties of soldiers were sent against him, with orders to take him dead or alive; but he threatened to shoot the first man who approached him, and the soldiers knew better than to put his promise to the test. Again a larger party was sent out. Wetzel's friends gathered round him in arms. The officer in command got a hint of what was likely to happen if he tried to carry out his orders, and prudently gave up the attempt.

At last the bold outlaw fell into the hands of justice. He was amusing himself in a tavern when some soldiers came by, seized him, and carried him off to the general. Once more he found himself in hateful fetters, with the gallows close in view before him. But as soon as his arrest became known, there was an outburst of popular indignation. 'Is such a man to be hanged for killing an Indian,' asked the backwoodsmen, 'when the Indians are killing us without scruple, and we can ill spare the services of the best scout on the frontier?' The excitement was so great that bands of armed men were preparing to release their favourite by force. When things had come to such a pass, General Harmer thought well to imitate the discretion of his subordinates. He gave way to the temper of the people, and set Wetzel at liberty.

Like some other heroes, in the latter part of his life the champion of the backwoods disappears under a cloud. He

took a trip to New Orleans, where, as may be imagined, his habits and principles scarcely harmonized with those of town life. It seems that he got into trouble, and was imprisoned for two years. This confinement injured his health. No more stirring exploits are recorded of him; and he is said to have died in obscurity about the beginning of this century, being then on the Mississippi, far from the familiar scenes of his eventful youth.



CHAPTER XI.

THE MORAVIAN MASSACRE.



WE now come to the blackest spot in the history of the backwoods. We have seen how a spirit of mutual hatred burned continually along the whole frontier, blazing up at every excuse into open war; and that it were often hard to say whether the red or the white men showed themselves the more savage in their frequent encounters. An oasis in all this bloodshed was the work of the

Moravian missionaries. A small band of these devoted men had been foremost in braving the perils of the wilderness; and their piety was sooner successful in conciliating the goodwill of the Indians than the arms of their countrymen in inspiring fear. After years of persevering labour, about four hundred converted Indians, chiefly Delawares, were gathered together, to make the experiment of living by peaceable labour. The disputes between Britain and her colonies were coming to a head when this hopeful community made a settlement on

the banks of the Muskingum, in a wild country which is now part of the State of Ohio. Here three villages were built at a short distance from each other, receiving from the German leaders of the enterprise the names of Gnadenhutten, Salem, and Schönbrunn. The missionaries resided here among their converts, instructing them in the arts of civilisation, as well as in the principles of their religion, which experience had shown to have very little hold on the Indian so long as he remained in his barbarous state. They were taught to read and write; they learned to lay aside their old customs to some extent, and to exchange the grotesque finery of paint and feathers for European dress. They became farmers, cultivating the land, and owning cattle and pigs. The conveniences and even some of the amenities of life were being introduced among them; and everything bid fair for the prosperity of this inoffensive colony, when, by a storm of evil passion, the fruits of so much zeal and patience were scattered to the winds.

The revolutionary war broke out, and most of the Indian tribes on the frontier took an active part either on the side of the British or of the colonists; small excuse was needed to drive these fierce natures into battle. The Moravian Indians, true to the principles which they had been taught, resolved to remain neutral. But, situated as they were, at an equal distance between the outposts of the combatants, they found their position a most difficult and unpleasant one. As was generally the case with 'praying' Indians in time of war, they were suspected, both by their own people, jealous of their improved condition, and by their white neighbours, who were slow to believe that a red skin could cover an honest and humane heart. They were accused by turns of harbouring and aiding either party. These accusations were so far true that the Moravians seem to have given to war parties the

food and lodging which were demanded by the laws of Indian hospitality, and which would have been taken by force if not offered in friendship; on the other hand, they showed their good-will to the whites by warning them of intended raids, and helping to rescue prisoners from captivity. Both forms of kindness were repaid by threats and ill-usage. At last, towards the end of the war, they were induced or forced by the British authorities and the Indians of their own tribe to leave the settlement on which they had been working for ten years, and to remove to the Sandusky river.

The excuse made for this was their safety, but it appeared that they were to be treated as enemies rather than helpless friends. The missionaries were taken as prisoners to Detroit, the headquarters of the English forces in the west. The poor Indians, who had been forced to abandon their crops and cattle, found themselves hard put to it for means of subsistence in their new home, and during the winter suffered much from cold and hunger. In early spring they obtained permission to go back to the Muskingum, and gather the corn which they had left on the stalk. About one hundred and fifty of them set out on this errand. They spent a week or so in their deserted villages, gathered the corn, and were about to return with it to their friends, when they were visited by a body of militia from the American frontier.

This company of a hundred men or more, commanded by a Colonel Williamson, had been raised to take retaliation for certain depredations and murders recently committed by some of the Indian scalping parties. It being a fine February, this incursion had been made at an earlier period than usual, and the settlers believed their enemies would not have ventured upon it if they had not found a half-way house at Gnadenhutzen, to fall back upon in case of bad weather. Blind with fury, and thirsting for Indian blood, the revengers made

straight for the Moravian towns, without any attempt to find the real authors of the injury. From the first their proceedings show their intentions in only too clear a light.

In three detachments they approached Gnadenhutzen. When close to the village they came upon a young half-breed, named Joseph Shabosh, who was catching horses in the woods. The first warning he had was a shot which laid him helpless; then they brutally killed and mutilated the poor fellow, begging for his life, and crying out that he was the son of a white man and a Christian. His brother-in-law, Jacob, was binding corn a little way off. Perceiving the white men, some of whom he knew, he advanced to meet them as a friend; but when he saw them deliberately shooting another Indian who was crossing the river in a canoe, he had some glimpse of their purpose, and ran for his life. Unfortunately, in his confusion, instead of making for the village, he ran in quite the opposite direction, so that no alarm was given to the rest of his people. A gun fired in the woods was not such an extraordinary occurrence as to excite apprehension.

The murderers pushed on, and found the main body of the Indians at work in the fields on the other side of the river. So little apprehension was there of resistance, that one party crossed the river by means of a sugar trough, two or three at a time placing their clothes and guns in it, and swimming alongside. The Indians, who might easily have opposed their landing, received the strangers kindly and unsuspiciously. But they had their arms with them; for in these troubled times a farmer seldom used spade or sickle without keeping his gun at hand. And though they were scattered over the fields, and were in number only half as strong as the white men, these wretches thought well to dissemble their purpose, calling treachery to the aid of cowardice. Pretending to have come in the most friendly spirit, they offered to take the

Indians to Fort Pitt, the chief American station in these parts, where they would be kindly received, and might establish themselves far more advantageously than in the barren region of the Sandusky.

The poor Indians readily believed this story. The authorities at Fort Pitt had already shown a friendly disposition towards them; and after the harsh treatment they had experienced from the British officers and their own countrymen, they were well pleased at the prospect of a home in which they might live securely and prove their peaceful inclinations. So, with the utmost cordiality, they mingled among the bringers of these false promises, readily gave up their arms, escorted the white men to their village, and busied themselves in hospitable preparations for the entertainment of their murderers. Nothing more completely displays the harmless character of the converts than this confidence, which bespeaks them unconscious of offence:—

‘We won their love, an easy task,
Suspicion lurks not with the true;
And they who wear no falsehood’s mask,
Deem others void of falsehood too.’

Alas! these truthful people were indeed raw disciples of their new religion, if they had not learned that men bearing the Christian name have too often sunk to crimes which would be a disgrace even to savage nature.

So entirely were they deceived by the promises of their guests, that the Moravians sent to their brethren at Salem, informing them of their good fortune, and desiring them to come at once to Gnadenhutten that they might all set out together for the American territory. Again implicit confidence was given; the Salem Indians were no less pleased by the hope of a friendly reception and settlement in the country which had once been their own. To a party of mounted

men who arrived to hasten and escort them on their way, they gave up their arms and tools on the promise that these should be returned to them at Fort Pitt. They were a little astonished that, on leaving the village, the white men set fire to their church and houses, but it was explained that this was to prevent them falling into the hands of the British Indians. As they approached the other village, their suspicions were aroused by the sight of a sandy spot where a body appeared to have been weltering in blood; but even if they had desired to do so, they had now no means of resisting their guards. It is said that these scoundrels made hypocritical professions of piety, talking to the simple Indians in a canting strain, the better to lull their doubts. They went quietly on to Gnadenhutten, where their eyes were soon opened to find themselves prisoners, like their friends there, who had now learned something of the real intentions of the visitors, and were closely confined in their own houses.

The Indians at Schoenbrunn were more fortunate. They, too, had almost fallen into the trap; but as they were on their way to join the rest, they came upon the mangled corpse of Joseph Shabosh. This, and the number of horse tracks on the ground, excited just suspicions. They turned back and fled, saving the treacherous crew the additional guilt of their death.

Not quite a hundred persons, less than half of them grown men, the rest women and children were thus gathered together and shut up in two houses at Gnadenhutten under a guard. All pretence being thus laid aside, the white men began to accuse them of stealing horses and tools. It was in vain that the poor Indians affirmed their innocence and begged for mercy. Their destruction was already determined on the principles of 'Jeddart justice'—punish first and try afterwards. Yet Williamson and his officers hesitated to have so much blood on their own heads. The form of a council was gone

through. The men being paraded, their commander put the question to them, whether the prisoners should be taken to Fort Pitt or put to death at once. All who were in favour of the more merciful course were ordered to step to the front. Only some eighteen came forward. They, in whom humanity and religion were not extinguished by hatred, finding their comrades bent on slaughter, withdrew to a little distance, and, with the liveliest tokens of horror, protested their innocence of the scene which ensued. There is also reason to hope that some of those who remained took no active part in the slaughter, though they did not venture to oppose the clamour which dictated it.

The Moravians were now told to prepare for death, and seeing no remedy, asked only a little time for devotion, which was granted. 'Then, asking pardon for whatever offence they had given or grief they had occasioned to each other, the Indians kneeled down, offering prayers to God their Saviour ; and kissing one another under a flood of tears, fully resigned to His will, they sang praises unto Him, in the joyful hope that they would soon be relieved from all pains, and join their Redeemer in everlasting bliss.' Meanwhile, the murderers were consulting how they should despatch their victims. Some, horrible to tell, actually proposed to set fire to the houses in which the helpless crowd were confined, and burn them to death. Some, growing impatient, interrupted the last hymn that the Moravians could sing on earth, calling out to know if they were not ready.

A brawny ruffian began the work by snatching up a ponderous mallet, with which he rushed into one of the houses, felling the Indians like so many cattle ; he knocked fourteen on the head without stopping. The rest fell on with guns, knives, and tomahawks, killing and scalping as fast as they could strike among the crowd of bodies, living and dead. In

a few minutes all was over. The women and children no longer knelt and stretched out their weak hands to the inhuman butchers; the infant was silent in its mother's blood; the wounded had ceased to groan; the strong men lay motionless and contorted corpses. These brave conquerors had nothing to do but to stumble through the reeking shambles and leisurely make sure of any of the unfortunate creatures who appeared to show signs of life!

Only two or three young persons are known to have escaped from this butchery. A lad, scalped and wounded, feigning death, waited till the murderers had withdrawn, when he was able to crawl over the gory bodies of his friends, and reach the woods without further hurt. Another youth, of fourteen or fifteen, contrived to raise a plank in the floor, and crept down into a cellar, where he lay hid, with what feelings may be imagined, the blood dripping on him from above, till he, too, found means of escaping just in time to save himself from being burned alive. A little boy was rescued by the compunction of a white man, who took him home and educated him—let us trust in other sentiments than those which inspired such apostles of civilisation.

Towards nightfall Williamson's men set fire to the houses, making a funeral pile of the dead, and perhaps of the dying. Then, yelling and singing in diabolic exultation, they set out homewards with their scalps and booty. They returned in triumph, and were received as heroes who had exterminated a dangerous brood of warriors; for even they were ashamed to tell the whole truth of their achievements, and their exasperated neighbours were not disposed at first to look too closely into a story which told of Indian blood.

When the truth came to be known, even the Indians were amazed, and the American people could not but feel shocked. It was, indeed, impossible for any civilised nation to regard

what had taken place without shame and horror. There is perhaps no greater crime either in the records of Indian warfare or those of European history. We shudder at the names of Glencoe, Cawnpore, St. Bartholomew, and such massacres done by ignorant barbarians at the will of a tyrant, in the heat of strife, or through the fierce spirit of religious fanaticism. But these murderers were men of our own race, men taken almost promiscuously from the neighbourhood in which they lived, men brought up in enlightened forms of religion, who, obeying only their own brutal instincts, in cold blood put to death such an inoffensive and defenceless band. Do we wonder that Christianity took no stronger hold on the native mind? How could the red men learn to repay such cruelty otherwise than in kind? This dark drama indeed had a fitting sequel, which may stand for a specimen of Indian atrocity.

It might be thought that the detestable massacre of Gnadenhutten had glutted the revengeful feelings of the Ohio settlers. But this taste of blood only roused them; soon afterwards preparations were made on a larger scale for a bolder dash into the Indian country. One of the worst features of this border warfare was, that its operations, instead of being sustained and decisive, had commonly the character of mere incursions and surprises, which injured the enemy without crippling, and exasperated without intimidating. It was such a war as farmers and hunters could carry on in the intervals of their ordinary occupations.

In May 1782, nearly five hundred volunteers, mounted upon their best horses, mustered on the Ohio. They elected as commander Colonel Crawford, a surveyor and experienced Indian fighter. It is said that he accepted the honour with reluctance; indeed, his character seems to have been such that

we are surprised to find him in company with the murderers of the Moravians. The little army, a formidable one in campaigns of this kind, took their march towards the Sandusky. Their first object was to destroy the new settlements of the Moravians on that river, then to attack the Wyandot towns in the same district, and their avowed resolution was to kill every Indian they fell in with, whether friend or foe. It was necessary that they should move with the utmost despatch and secrecy. But the cunning Indians were not deceived. Their scouts had seen the forming of the expedition, knew its strength and direction, and watched it unseen at every stage. In the deserted encampments of the white men, they learned from the writings on the trees and on scraps of paper, that no quarter was to be given to man, woman, or child. So the hostile tribes were gathering their forces, while Crawford's men held their way in rash confidence, with a carelessness and want of discipline which made their commander augur ill of the result. They appear to have despised the enemy, scarcely expecting any serious resistance, and supposing that the Indians would not be zealous to avenge the death of their Christian countrymen.

They arrived without opposition at the Moravian villages, but found them already destroyed and deserted, and their ruins overgrown with grass. The fact was that the inhabitants had removed to a safer situation some time before. Disappointed of the easy victory which they had hoped, the Americans had now to consider their own safety. They were several days' march from home, and dangerously near the warlike Delawares and Wyandots. A council was held upon the question of retreat. Unwilling, however, to return without booty or bloodshed, the officers resolved to advance one more day across the plains of Sandusky, in the hope of falling in with an Indian town on which to prove their

valour, or at least their ferocity. That day was their undoing.

They were making their way over a prairie, in the centre of which stood a grove, which is still called 'Battle Island.' Suddenly the war-whoop and a volley of bullets checked the advanced guard, and they were aware of an army of Indians almost concealed in the long grass. Hastily, according to the usual tactics of such encounters, each party made for the island of timber, and from the cover of the trees kept up a constant fire upon one another till dark. Many of these trees are, or were lately standing, the marks of the bullets plainly perceptible on their trunks.

The Indians had been driven out of the wood, but were not disheartened. Expecting reinforcements before long, they retired to the edge of the prairie, and both sides lay upon their arms all night, kindling large fires some little way in advance of their real camp as a precaution against surprise. In the morning the Indians did not attempt to renew the fight, but they could be seen moving about in various directions, and their numbers appeared to be increasing. The whites were almost surrounded. Seeing this, and being well aware that now they had not to do with peaceful Moravians, they resolved to retreat under cover of night. The day was passed in making preparations for this retreat, and in burying the dead and attending to the wounded.

At sunset a severe attack was opened from almost every side upon the little army, shut in the wood as in a fortress. This confirmed them in their desire to be off. When it grew dark, they broke through one unguarded point of the Indian lines, and making a circuit, regained the trail by which they had come, and pushed on homewards with all expedition. The Indians did not fail to pursue; but instead of harassing the main body, they spread over the country and cut off many

straggling parties who thought it safest to separate from the rest and thus make the best of their way home, but few of whom succeeded in escaping.

Among the unfortunate victims of this flight was Colonel Crawford. Anxiety for the fate of his son and some other relatives had caused him to lag behind; then his horse was too weary to make up with the army. He fell in with a small party of his comrades, and they were travelling along together when a party of Indians came upon them, and Crawford among others was made prisoner.

The prisoners were divided among the three tribes, Delawares, Shawnees, and Wyandots, who had taken part in the fighting. So infuriated were their captors, that most of them were killed with less ceremony than usual; but Crawford was assigned to the Delawares to be executed by signal tortures, as a successful commander, and in revenge for the massacre of the Moravians. Captain Pipe, as the Delaware chief called himself, with his own hands painted him black from head to foot—a mournful sign of his destined fate. Then he was led to the place appointed for the execution, on the way passing the mangled bodies of some of his late companions, who had been given over to the squaws and boys to be tomahawked.

Colonel Crawford had taken no part in the Gnadenhutten murders, for which, according to the rules of Indian justice, he was to suffer. There was little hope of mercy, but in his miserable situation he might well grasp at every chance. Recognising in one of the chiefs, named Wingenund, an old acquaintance whom he had entertained at his own house, he requested an interview with him, and piteously appealed to him in the name of their former friendship. The chief was much agitated, but professed himself unable to interfere; the excited feelings of the Indians were not to be controlled, and poor Crawford must prepare to meet death in its most dreadful

shape. Wingenund is said to have wept as he withdrew from the sight of what was to come. There was another person among the Indians to whom the colonel had more right to look for help, but did not find even sympathy. This was Simon Girty, the notorious white renegade, who had become one of the Indians, taking on the worst features of their character, and whose name along the Ohio frontier was held in such execration as that of Gan, the traitor among the knights of Charlemagne.

Poor Crawford was thus abandoned to his fate. The torture continued for three hours, the Indians exulting in his agonies, and upbraiding him with the death of their kinsmen at Gnadenhutten. His son and the other surviving prisoners were forced to be witnesses of this protracted cruelty, unable to help the sufferer in his heartrending torments, and with the horrible prospect of undergoing the same in no long time. Young Crawford was burned soon afterwards; another of these witnesses, Dr. Knight, was more fortunate. He escaped to give us an account of a scene, every detail of which was but too likely to be branded into his memory.

‘When he went to the fire, the colonel was stripped naked, ordered to sit down by the fire, and then they beat him with sticks and their fists. Presently after, I was treated in the same manner. They then tied a rope to the foot of a post about fifteen feet high, bound the colonel’s hands behind his back, and fastened the rope to the ligature between his wrists. The rope was long enough for him to sit down or walk round the post once or twice, and return the same way. The colonel then called to Girty, and asked if they intended to burn him. Girty answered “Yes.” The colonel said he would take it all patiently. Upon this, Captain Pipe, a Delaware chief, made a speech to the Indians, viz. about thirty or forty men, sixty or seventy squaws and boys.

‘When the speech was finished, they all yelled a hideous and hearty assent to what had been said. The Indian men then took up their guns, and shot powder into the colonel’s body, from his feet as far up as his neck. I think that not less than seventy loads were discharged upon his naked body. They then crowded about him, and, to the best of my observation, cut off his ears; when the throng had dispersed a little, I saw the blood running from both sides of his head in consequence thereof.

‘The fire was about six or seven yards from the post to which the colonel was tied; it was made of small hickory poles, burnt quite through in the middle, each end of the poles remaining about six feet in length. Three or four Indians by turns would take up individually one of these burning pieces of wood, and apply it to his naked body, already black with the powder. These tormentors presented themselves on every side of him, with the burning faggots and poles. Some of the squaws took broad boards, upon which they would carry a quantity of burning coals and hot embers, and throw on him, so that in a short time he had nothing but coals of fire and hot ashes to walk upon.

‘In the midst of these extreme tortures he called to Simon Girty, and begged of him to shoot him; but Girty making no answer, he called to him again. Girty then, by way of derision, told the colonel he had no gun, and at the same time, turning about to an Indian who was behind him, laughed heartily, and by all his gestures seemed delighted at the horrid scene. . . .

‘Colonel Crawford, at this period of his sufferings, besought the Almighty to have mercy upon his soul, spoke very low, and bore his torments with the most manly fortitude. He continued in all the extremities of pain for an hour and three-quarters or two hours longer, as near as I can judge, when at

last, being almost exhausted, he lay down on his belly; they then scalped him, and repeatedly threw the scalp in my face, telling me "that was my great captain." An old squaw (whose appearance every way answered the ideas people entertain of the devil) got a board, took a parcel of coals and ashes, and laid them on his back and head after he had been scalped. He then raised himself on his feet and began to walk round the post; they next put a burning stick to him, as usual, but he seemed more insensible of pain than before.

'The Indian fellow who had me in charge now took me away to Captain Pipe's house, about three-quarters of a mile from the place of the colonel's execution. I was bound all night, and thus prevented from seeing the last of the horrid spectacle.'

While this tragedy was going on, the heartless Girty came up to Dr. Knight, and told him with an oath that he was to be taken to the Shawnees' towns, there to suffer the same death in all its extremities. The sequel may be given in his own words:—

'Next morning, being June 12, the Indians untied me, and painted me black, and we set off for the Shawnees' town, which he told me was somewhat less than forty miles distant from that place. We soon came to the spot where the colonel had been burned, as it was partly in our way; I saw his bones lying among the remains of the fire, almost burnt to ashes. I suppose after he was dead, they laid his body on the fire. The Indian told me that was my big captain, and gave the scalp halloo.

'I pretended to this Indian I was ignorant of the death I was to die at the Shawnees' towns, assumed as cheerful a countenance as possible, and asked him if we were not to live together as brothers in one house when we should get to the town. He seemed well pleased, and said "Yes." He then

asked me if I could make a wigwam. I told him I could; he then seemed more friendly. We went that day, as near as I could judge, about twenty-five miles, the course partly south-west.

'The Indian told me next day we should come to the town, the sun being in such a direction, pointing nearly south. At night, when we went to rest, I attempted very often to untie myself, but the Indian was extremely vigilant, and scarcely ever shut his eyes that night. About daybreak he got up and untied me. He next began to mend up the fire; and as the gnats were troublesome, I asked him if I should make a smoke behind him. He said "Yes." I then took the end of a dogwood fork which had been burned down to about eighteen inches long; it was the longest stick I could find, yet too small for the purpose I had in view. Then I picked up another smaller stick, and taking a coal of fire between them, went behind him; then turning suddenly about, I struck him on the head with all the force I was master of, which so stunned him that he fell forward with both his hands into the fire, but seeing him recover and get up, I seized his gun, while he ran off howling in a most fearful manner. I followed him with a determination to shoot him down; but pulling back the cock of the gun with too great violence, I believe I broke the mainspring. I pursued him, however, about thirty yards, still endeavouring to fire the gun, but could not. Then going back to the fire, I took his blanket, a pair of new moccasins, his hoppers,¹ powder-horn, bullet bag, together with the gun, and marched off.'

Guided by the North Star he made his way through the woods, living as best he could upon unripe berries, young nettles, the juice of herbs, and one or two small birds he was able to knock down, for the gun had to be thrown away as

¹ Halter of twisted bark.

useless. At last, after travelling three weeks, he reached the settlements in a pitiful plight, and told his dismal tale. More than a hundred men of the expedition did not come back, so, according to the dark savage creed, there was a soul to appease the manes of each of the murdered Moravians.

Let us glance at the future of this unfortunate community. When revolutionary troubles were over, the American Government did its best to make reparation for what had been done, by encouraging the Moravian missionaries to continue their work. A large grant of land was made to them. The ruined settlement was re-established with the name of Goshen, and the scattered converts were gathered together under their faithful pastors. But peace brought dangers even more deadly than those of war. As the white population increased around them, the poor Indians became contaminated through their example, and especially by the love of drink, that curse of all their race. They sank into degradation, they became unable to support themselves, they disappeared from the country. Theirs was but the miserable history of almost all the Indian tribes among whom the white men came, and who perished sooner by the vices and diseases than by the weapons of their conquerors.



CHAPTER XII.

DANIEL BOONE, THE PIONEER.



WHEN the white men, after spreading with resistless energy into Ohio, turned southwards towards Kentucky, they found it a magnificent wilderness. Long ago, indeed, it had been the home of a great and for that age highly-civilised race, whose vast burial-mounds and ruined fortifications are still the wonder of the antiquary, like the gigantic bones

of the mammoth and mastodon which at a still earlier period were the monarchs of its swamps and canebrakes. But for hundreds of years it had been a tangled forest, serving for little more than a hunting-ground and a battle-field for the Cherokees, Creeks, and Catawbias on the south, and the Shawnees, Delawares, and Wyandots on the north, whose inveterate quarrels only ceased when they were driven away by the white man's arms. Thus Kentucky earned its grim name, '*The dark and bloody ground.*'

One of the first adventurers who tried the perils of this unknown solitude, and the leading spirit in the enterprises which brought about its colonization, was Daniel Boone. This mighty hunter and fearless pioneer, the most famous of all the backwoodsmen, was born in 1731, and 'raised' first in Pennsylvania, then in North Carolina. He came, we are told, of a Quaker family, but early showed tastes that scarcely belonged to the quiet disposition of this sect. From a boy he passionately loved roaming in the haunts of buffaloes, bears, deer, panthers, wolves, and turkeys, with always the chance of a shot at or from an Indian. Where he spent all his early years we do not know, but he must have wandered far and wide, and learned, at the risk of his life, the lessons of woodcraft that were the best part of his education. In Tennessee, then entirely unknown to the whites, a tree is said to be still standing, on the bark of which may be read this roughly-carved inscription:—

		D. BOON		
<i>called</i>	—	a <i>Bar</i>	—	on
in	—	the	—	tree
year	—	1760		

But this may have been the work of some admiring followers in his footsteps.

Having learned from a comrade that there was a hunter's paradise in the wonderful 'cane land' beyond the mountains, he first came to Kentucky in 1769, and spent nearly three years there hunting and exploring. Part of the time he had a few companions; then we find him with no one but his brother, and for some months he was actually tramping through the wilderness alone, hundreds of miles from the nearest white men. Of course the adventurers ran constant

risk from parties of Indians, as keen hunters of men as they themselves were of game. Often Boone had to fight or fly for his life, and once he was surprised and kept prisoner for a few days. But these accidents only gave a zest to the life of such a man; we need not be surprised that he used to speak enthusiastically of the happiness which he enjoyed during this expedition. It was not only that fear was unknown to his nature, and that temperance and exercise gave him a frame of iron. The woods were to him all that home is to most men; he seems to have had a strong love for and trust in nature, that filled his soul in the deepest solitudes; and when, after his long day's march, making his simple meal off the game that he had shot, or perhaps being fain to draw his belt tighter over his empty stomach and wait patiently for better luck, he lay down on the bare ground among thickets in which all around him prowled fierce beasts, or, for what he knew, fiercer savages, his thoughts would be as peaceful and his sleep as soft as that of a child who had scarce heard the names of death or danger.

While with such a light heart he roved through Kentucky, carrying little other baggage than his knife and gun, never tasting bread or salt, and for months together meeting no friendly face, Boone had left behind him in Carolina not only a farm, but a wife and children. And when he had seen for himself what Kentucky was, and what its first inhabitants must expect to go through, he went home, sold his property, and set off with his family and a number of kindred spirits for this promised land of hardships and perils. There were forty armed men in the party, guarding the women and children, and a long train of horses loaded with their belongings. When they reached the mountains which like a wall shut off Kentucky from Virginia, they were attacked by the Indians, and six of the men were killed, among these Boone's eldest

son. This so discouraged the adventurers that they fell back to the settlements, and did not renew the enterprise for three or four years.

In 1775, we find Boone again leading a party of pioneers across the mountains. Fighting their way against the Indians, they now succeeded in reaching the Kentucky river, where they built a log fort that came to be known as Boonesborough. This shelter having been secured, Boone returned and fetched his family, and here, when almost fifty years old, he set up his household in the midst of ruthless and restless enemies, where fighting was almost the daily business of a life that had to be wrung from the forest and the swamp.

The inhabitants, or rather the garrison of Boonesborough were constantly harassed by the attacks and tricks of their lurking foe, who soon became more actively hostile as the revolutionary war went on. But the little settlement only grew strong by this rude handling. Now and then they lost a man, or had their corn destroyed and their cattle driven off; but whenever the Indians ventured an attack, the rifles of the defenders were too much for them, though sometimes there might not be twenty men in the fort.

Their first serious misfortune was in 1778, when Boone and a number of his men, having gone to a salt-lick to make salt, were taken prisoners by an overpowering number of Indians. They surrendered on the promise of good treatment, and on this score Boone had nothing to complain of. The Indians recognised him as a man after their own heart, and seemed so anxious to make him one of themselves that they refused a ransom of £100 which the English Governor of Detroit offered for him. He was adopted into a chief's family and allowed to use his unrivalled talents in hunting. But in shooting with them he took good care not to do his best, being willing to let the Indians beat him as a marksman

rather than to run the risk of provoking their fickle and jealous temper.

When he had been nearly six months among the Indians, and his wife and family, supposing him dead, had gone back to Carolina, his friendly captors learned that they had been too hasty in trusting such a renowned enemy. Boone had seen a large band of warriors painting themselves for an expedition, which, as he learned, was directed against Boonesborough. This determined him to leave them. Continuing to hunt and shoot with them, and to behave in such a way that they had no suspicion of his intentions, he took the first opportunity of making off with food enough for only one meal; and so anxious was he to warn his countrymen at the fort, that he travelled more than a hundred and fifty miles in four days, reaching Boonesborough not a day too soon.

He found the fortifications in a state of bad repair, and the garrison carelessly dispersed on their fields; but at the news he brought they set about hastily preparing for the expected attack. The Indians, however, did not present themselves, though the woods were full of their scouts; Boone's escape had warned them to proceed with consideration. Then, as weeks passed without their making any sign, the bold Boone went out to look for them with only nineteen men, who were yet more than a third of the strength of his little garrison. Coming to one of the Indian towns and finding it deserted, he suspected, as was the case, that their army had set out and that he had passed it on his way. So now he had to return, marching night and day, and making a circuit to avoid the Indians. It was all he could do to get to Boonesborough before them, and on the day after his arrival, the enemy appeared, nearly five hundred strong, led by a Canadian officer under the British flag.

These were heavy odds against the garrison of fifty men,

who, on being summoned to surrender, asked two days to think over it, and employed the time well in preparing for a desperate resistance. Boone, however, and several of his men consented to go out and treat with the commander of the enemy. They seemed likely to come to terms, but Boone was informed that it was a singular custom among the Indians, on concluding a treaty, for two of them to take each white man by the hands. Though Daniel did not admire the custom, he allowed himself to be caught hold of, but when he found that he was being dragged away, he broke loose, and he and his men ran back to the fort under a sharp fire, by which only one of them was injured.

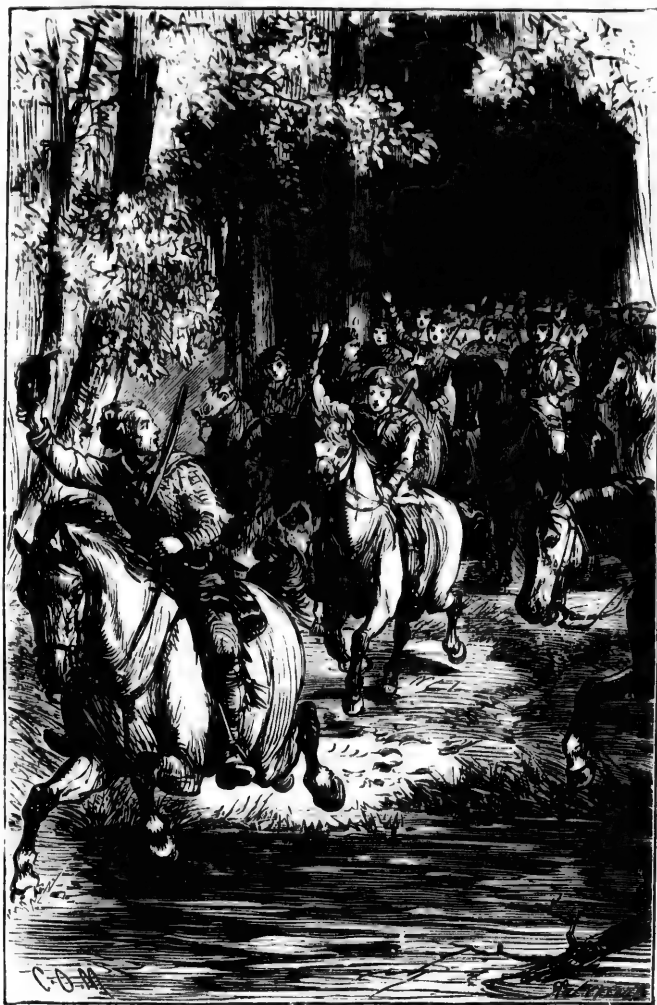
As negotiations were seen not to be trusted, the siege now began in earnest and lasted for a week. Its only remarkable feature was that the assailants tried to drive a mine under the banks of the river into the fort, but their design was discovered through the water being noticed to be muddy with the earth thrown into it, and they stopped when they saw that a countermine was being dug within. After suffering heavy loss, they gave up the attempt, and the defenders were safe with the loss of only two men killed, though Boone declares that they picked up a hundred and twenty-five pounds of bullets fired into the fort, besides those that were buried in the logs.

For some two years Boonesborough was now left in peace, and other white settlements sprang up in the country, from which the Indians had failed to drive the first intruders. In 1782, the tribes made a great effort to crush these settlements. Much loss and suffering had to be endured for a time, and the white men, through their own rashness, were defeated at a disastrous battle fought near Blue Licks, the place where Boone had already been taken prisoner.

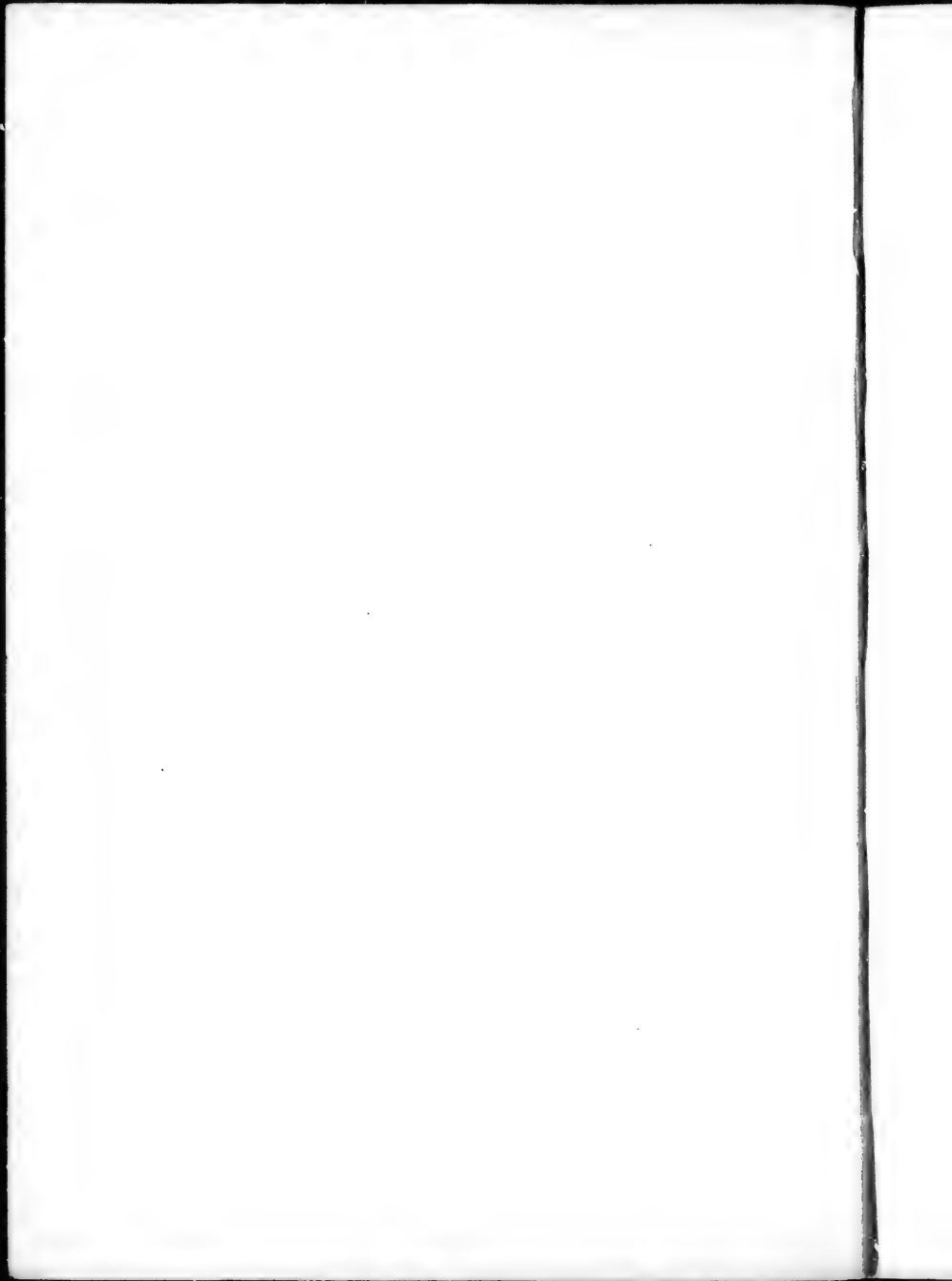
Nearly two hundred men, most of them mounted, had

hastily pursued two or three times their own number of Indians. The Indians were evidently in no hurry, and showed none of the stealthiness which usually characterized their movements; they were retreating along a broad buffalo track, and many of the trees on each side were marked with their hatchets as if to guide the pursuers, while they had been stepping in one another's tracks to conceal their numbers. Experienced Indian fighters like Boone observed these signs, and feared that they were being led into an ambush; most of their companions, however, thought of nothing but coming to close quarters with the enemy. There were officers who nominally had command, but discipline was never the strong point of the bold borderers; and on they pushed without caution or consideration, till they reached the Licking river, where they saw the last of the Indians leisurely disappearing over a hill on the other side.

Here, indeed, they halted to take counsel. Boone's opinion was listened to with respect. He said that the Indians must have reason to wish for a battle, so it would be better for them to await a strong reinforcement which was known to be coming to their aid. He even pointed to the place where he thought the enemy would be lying in ambush, for he knew the ground well. If his friends were determined to advance, he advised them to divide into two parties, one of which might cross the river at another point, and take the lurking Indians in the rear at the same time as they were assailed from the front. A lively discussion now began, which was suddenly put an end to by a hot-headed officer, who gave a whoop, spurred his horse into the ford, waved his hat in the air, and cried out, 'Let all who are not cowards follow me!' The imprudent valour of the Kentuckians was carried away by such an appeal. Without waiting another instant to reflect or to take orders from their commander, the whole



THE BATTLE OF BLUE LICKS.



body dashed into the stream and tumultuously resumed the trail of the enemy, each eager to lead the van.

The scene, which is now the neighbourhood of a popular watering-place, was then a silent wild, where men might well have paused and bethought themselves before thus tempting a fierce and crafty foe. When the little army had struggled through the ford, their march lay up a bare ridge, which, broken only by dark rocks and a few stunted cedars, narrowed itself to a spot where two wooded ravines met, and formed a natural trap for the force advancing madly into it without a single scout to feel the way. At the end of this ridge, just as Boone had feared, the Indians were lying in the ravines; and as soon as the Kentuckians were deep enough into the trap, suddenly the bullets came whistling among them.

They were not slow to reply, but at a fatal disadvantage. Exposed on the open ground to a fire from either side, they could only now and then catch a glimpse of their foes, bounding and crawling in the bushes. Yet gallantly they charged upon the enemy; and the fight was hotly contested for a quarter of an hour, till the Indians, with their superior numbers, began to close round the white men, threatening to cut them off from the river. Those in the rear saw this movement first, and made a hasty retreat while there was yet time; then the van, too, lost heart, and the whole body fled in disorder towards the ford. Before they could reach it, the Indians were among them, and the river became covered with a struggling mass of riders, swimmers, and painted warriors. A great slaughter took place here, especially among the unmounted men, and the pursuit continued for twenty miles. Those who crossed in safety dispersed and fled homewards by circuitous routes. Among them was Boone. Instead of flying down the hillside, crowded with pursuers and pursued, he

had boldly entered one of the ravines in which the Indians had been lying; and though he was chased by some of them, he managed to give them the slip and reach a part of the river where he swam across without interference. Another of his sons had been killed before his eyes.

This day was a heavy blow for young Kentucky; but the victors were not long allowed to rejoice in what they had done. As many as a thousand militiamen could now be collected to push the war into the Indian country, and the red man was sternly taught that his reign over this fertile waste had come to an end.

We hear of only one more remarkable adventure that 'Colonel' Boone, as he was now called, had with the Indians. Four warriors one day stole upon him unarmed in a shed used for drying tobacco, and thought they had him sure this time. But Boone was still too clever for them. He threw a heap of dry tobacco stalks among the party, and darted out while they were all in a helpless state of sneezing! This story looks very like one of the many 'stories' which gathered round the memory of most of these border heroes. The fact is that henceforth little more than the main lines of Boone's life are clear. Hitherto we have been able to follow a work which was published in his old age as his autobiography, and the truth of which he appears to have vouched for, though it was really written for him by some far more grandiloquent author. The worthy hunter himself was as helpless with the pen as he was skilful with the rifle. He was highly proud of this production, and delighted in hearing it read; but there is something rather absurd in such fine sentences as the following extract, when published under the name of the simple old hunter:—'What thanks—what ardent and ceaseless thanks—are due to that all-superintending Providence which has turned a cruel war into peace, brought order out of confusion,

made the fierce savages placid, and turned away their hostile weapons from our country ! May the same almighty goodness banish the accursed monster, War, from all lands, with her hated associates, Rapine and insatiable Ambition ! Let Peace, descending from her native heaven, bid her olives spring amid the joyful nations ; and Plenty, in league with Commerce, scatter blessings from her copious hand !' The result would surely have been more satisfactory if this prize-essayist scribe had been content to take down Boone's own ever-so-rough words, and left his deeds to point their moral for themselves.

The perils of that trying time had not deterred settlers of the right stamp from coming to share them ; and when the war ceased, and the Indian tribes lost the support of England, a host of emigrants, many of them veterans from the army, began to pour in, so that the territory beyond the mountains made rapid progress in all the arts and conditions of society. Ten years after the building of Boone's fort, the people felt themselves so independent that they were agitating a separation from the parent State of Virginia ; and in a few years more the population of Kentucky numbered a hundred thousand. Now was the time when the pioneers should have had their reward. But men like Boone, shrewdest and sagest on the war trail or the chase, were often simple as children in all the ways of civilised life, and their deserts fell into the hands of cunning and unscrupulous fellows, who seldom appeared till the fighting was over. Our hero had managed to let himself be robbed of all his money ; then by neglecting to go through any legal forms to secure his rights, he found new-comers taking possession of the very land he had won and held so dearly. Besides, the neighbourhood of civilised men was insupportable to him ; like most of these old hunters, he wanted what they called 'range,' and fancied he was not breathing the pure open air if there was a village within miles of him. So the hale old

man turned his back upon the State which he had founded, and left the lawyers and speculators to fight for it among themselves, while, shouldering his rifle, he wandered away to the uncleared woods, where he and his family, who appeared to have shared his tastes, might hope to live with nature undisputed.

Here Boone might have claimed the land on which he settled, but again he lost it for want of taking the trouble to establish a legal title. And as emigration followed him even here, he kept moving farther and farther 'back' to the West, always declaring that it was time to seek another home when he could no longer fell a tree so that its top would lie within a few yards of his cabin. He used to say that he would rather live among Indians than Yankees, of whose shrewd, money-making ways he had a special abhorrence, while he bore a kindly feeling towards the enemy whom he had so often met in fair fight.

'A rolling stone gathers no moss,' says the proverb, and moss was just what Boone had no desire to gather. Wealth was in his eyes scarcely worth more than withered leaves. Rich in the affection of his children and the respect of all, this 'active hermit,' as Byron calls him,

'Enjoyed the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.'

Almost to the last he continued to hunt, and to make long excursions into the unbroken forest and the untravelled prairie, where his simple heart found its truest happiness. He was nearly ninety when he died, as poor and as plain-minded as he had lived.

A picture of Boone may easily be formed by those who have read Fenimore Cooper's Indian novels, and remember the admirable character who appears in them so often and

under so many names, in most of the arts of forest life showing himself more Indian than the Indians. He is described as a mild and quiet-looking man, with nothing remarkable in his appearance. His skill as a marksman is one of the traditions of the West, and, in his case at least, it can scarcely be exaggerated. Audubon the naturalist, who visited Boone in his old age, tells us how the famous hunter shot for him some squirrels which he wished to have as specimens. At every shot he struck the branch on which the little animal was, so closely that it was knocked off, stunned by the shock, without the least injury to its skin ; so true was the eye and so firm was the hand of one who had led this active and temperate life.

Daniel Boone's figure rightly occupies a prominent place among the homespun heroes of the American Republic. Free from some of the common faults of his class, he was a striking example of their merits, and had, besides, an innate strength and elevation of mind that is not often found in the most professed philosophers. Many of the rough 'fathers of the West,' after passing their best years among the wonders of the woods, and daily looking the mysteries of life and death close in the face, are recorded to have become religious men in latter days. But all his life Daniel Boone, with a mind dim enough as to doctrine or literature, passed in learning from nature that spirit of trustful reverence in which he spoke of himself as 'an instrument ordained to settle the wilderness.'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SETTLERS AT HOME.



ALL this time, amid these stirring scenes of conflict, human life, which shows such a wonderful vigour in adapting itself to circumstances, went on in the backwoods much the same as elsewhere. People laughed and grumbled, worked and rested, ate and drank, quarrelled and made friends again, just as if Indians and panthers

had been as rare in the neighbourhood as policemen. Young couples fell in love, married, and brought up huge families of stout hearty children to make the best of things as they found them.

'And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts have never been the prey
Of care or gain ; the green woods were their portions ;
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions ;

Simple they were, not savage ; and their rifles
Though very true, were yet not made for trifles.

‘Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil ;
Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers ;
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil ;
The lust which stings, the splendour which encumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil ;
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unshining people of the woods.’

So sings Byron without knowing much about it. Poets have always been apt to go into unqualified raptures over the woods and the wilderness ; but they might have another story to tell if ever they had themselves split a pile of logs, or driven a stubborn team through a maze of blackened stumps. We have not needed to look very closely at backwoods’ life to see that it was not all Arcadian simplicity and Utopian happiness. But if the pioneers had their faults and their troubles, not unlike other people, we have seen that they had some qualities which are not to be despised in a world such as ours is. And it may be hoped the reader has found such an interest in these rough heroes, that before parting with them he will care to take a peep at their home life.

Humble these backwoods homes were for the most part, but none the worse of that in the eyes of their owners. A letter in Howe’s *Historical Collections of Ohio* gives us a sketch which might stand for hundreds of such households. ‘I furnished myself,’ says the writer, ‘with a loaf of bread, a piece of pickled pork, some potatoes, borrowed a frying-pan, and commenced housekeeping. I was not hindered from my work by company ; for the first week I did not see a living soul ; but, to make amends for the want of it, I had every night a most glorious concert of wolves and owls. I soon, like Adam, saw the necessity of a helpmate, and persuaded a young

woman to tie her destiny to mine. I built a log-house twenty feet square, quite aristocratic in those days, and moved into it. I was fortunate enough to possess a jack-knife; with that I made a wooden knife and two forks which answered admirably for us to eat with. A bedstead was wanted; I took two round poles for the posts, inserted a hole in them for a side rail; two other poles were inserted for the end pieces, the ends of which were put in the logs of the house; some puncheons were then split and laid from the side rail to the crevices between the logs of the house, which formed a substantial bed-cord, on which we laid our straw bed,—the only bed we had,—on which we slept as soundly and woke as happy as Albert and Victoria.’

The early settlers generally came in companies and built their cabins together, as we have seen, within a stockade which was sure to be soon marked by some Indian bullets. But when the danger could not prevent young girls from taking evening walks or moonlight trips on the Ohio, these undaunted emigrants were not slow to disperse themselves, as soon as the Indians became a little less troublesome, over the lands where so much was to be done before a comfortable home could be provided. New-comers had then to make shift with lodging in a hollow trunk or ‘camp’ of boughs, till they found time to put up a log-house.

With the help of experienced neighbours the house would soon become habitable. Perhaps it was a shanty of one room; perhaps a more pretentious abode of no less than two storeys, with a ladder by way of staircase. A rough table and stools were fitted with three legs that they might stand firmer on the uneven floor. Other household requisites—beds, bowls, boxes, and the like—were readily supplied from the woods, and especially by the ‘buckeye,’ a kind of horse-chestnut, which became, so to speak, the patron tree of the

West. Every article came in handy for whatever purpose it could be put to ; boxes and tubs served for seats ; baby was rocked in a sugar trough or a pack-saddle. By the help of pegs and shelves the walls were ornamented with all the spare clothes of the family hung up like tapestry, and with pewter plates, pots and pans, perhaps with copies of the Bible, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and a few more well-thumbed books, treasures such as every settler had not to display. As for light and ventilation, it might well happen that they were more than sufficiently provided for by the door, the wide chimney, and the chinks between the shrunk logs ; but there would also be a hole left for a window, and filled with paper soaked in bear's oil or hog's lard. Glass was a later luxury, which is said to have so amazed one young Kentuckian when he first saw it used in domestic architecture, that he ran to his mother crying to her to come and see the house *with specs on*. But whatever else it might be poor in, the hunter's cabin—and most of the early settlers were hunters by taste or necessity—was seldom unprovided with store of bear or buffalo skins, under which he and his, with the aid of a log fire burning all night, might defy the cold and wet, even when they could pass their arms through the warped logs of walls and roof.

Like their houses, the dress of the backwoodsman was for use rather than show. Every one was his own tailor, tanner, cobbler, dyer, and so forth. The ladies, some of whom lived to become very fine ladies indeed in altered times, generally went about their work in a homespun stuff called linsey, made of flax mixed with wool of sheep or buffaloes. A calico dress or skirt was a holiday costume. The principal garment of the men was the hunting shirt, a loose frock reaching about half-way down the thighs, belted at the waist, where hung the knife, pouch, and tomahawk, and with a capacious breast that

served as pocket when there was anything to put in it. The hunters had them coloured according to the season of the year, that they might move about in the woods without startling the keen eye of deer or Indians. Thus in summer, green was their favourite wear; in the winter, a colour was preferred like that of the bark of trees; and when snow covered the ground, they would draw on a white shirt if they had one.

This frock was made of linsey or buckskin. The latter was also a common material for breeches, having the advantage of wearing well, but the disadvantage of being extremely uncomfortable after getting wet, unless it had been carefully tanned in the Indian fashion. When a pair of buckskins had been dried, they would rattle on the floor like tin kettles, and putting them on upon a cold morning has been compared to thrusting the limbs into a couple of rusty stove-pipes. Below the breeches were leather leggings and moccasins or primitive home-made shoes. The moccasins were very comfortable for walking in fine weather, and when it was cold they might be stuffed with hair or leaves, which answered not badly for socks; but in wet weather, the saying went they were only 'a decent way of going barefoot.' It was not surprising to hear that the backwoodsman, hardy as he could not but be, suffered much from rheumatism in his old age. Mittens he had for the very cold weather; and his head was protected by a hat of straw, plaited by himself, or a cap of skin, often adorned with the head or tail of the racoon from which he had taken this trophy.

The settler and his family might at first have to live on nothing but meat, a diet that came to be both unpalatable and unwholesome. But as soon as they were safely housed, a patch of Indian corn would be planted, which not only furnished food for man and beast, but the husks could be

plaited into horse-collars, and corn cobs came in useful for pipes. The corn was pounded in a stump burned hollow, or ground in a rude hand-mill. It was not every one who had a water-mill within easy distance, though we hear of one sturdy backwoodsman who walked seventy-five miles and back to get some flour properly ground for his sick wife. In health these good folks were content with coarse meal, sifted through a hide stretched on a hoop and pierced with holes. So that the crop did not fail, the family could have their fill of hog and hominy, mush and milk, and the various cakes for which American kitchens are celebrated. By and by, a little wheat would be grown for a Sunday treat, that might recall old times in the richer States; and the 'truck patch' became green with beans, pumpkins, melons, turnips, and squash. Then the provident housewife need feel no shame when it was time to blow the conch shell that called her husband and sons to a dinner which they found as good as an emperor's. The luxury most missed was the simple one of salt, a thing not always to be had if the Indians were out near the 'Licks,' from which it was made.

It was years before the apples, pears, and peaches brought from New England or Virginia came to bearing fruit, but the backwoodsmen contrived to find substitutes for them in the meanwhile. Raw turnips seem to have been a favourite dainty with this strong-stomached people. Scraping turnips and cracking nuts was part of the regular recreation of winter evenings, when the family sat round the cheerful blaze of pine knots or hickory bark, and plaited straw or wove ropes of bark or tow, and sang songs, and told for the hundredth time the good old stories of heroes, such as Jack the Giant-killer and Robin Hood.

The woods abounded in their season with wild fruits—blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, whortle-

berries, service-berries, plums, cherries, grapes, crab-apples, walnuts, hickory nuts, chestnuts, haws, and others. But nutting and blackberrying had often to be done under difficulties. On Sundays the people would go out in large parties, and armed men kept good watch while the women and children gathered the fruit. It was not only the Indians they had to be afraid of. In every thicket they might be poaching on the preserves of a panther, or disturbing the repose of a bear, not to speak of hungry wolves, that asked for nothing better than to meet some little girl alone at a safe distance from her father's rifle. But the worst neighbours of all were the snakes,—the copper-heads and the rattlesnakes,—which would lie through the winter in rocky clefts, come gliding forth with the spring into the fields and woods, where no one could walk unwarily without the risk of hearing the warning rattle, and seeing, perhaps too late, the yellow folds of the hateful reptile, the very sight of which often held the victim rooted to the ground with terror while it was coiling itself for the wrathful spring.

We are not to suppose that a race like the backwoodsmen allowed themselves to be terrified by a danger which they soon came to take as a matter of course, even in the dog days, when the venom was most likely to be fatal. Dr. Doddridge tells us that when he was a boy, the reapers would come upon snakes half a dozen times in a day, and might sometimes take them up among the armfuls of grain. Then the girls would cry out, not so much from fright, as to give their sweethearts a chance of running up to the rescue. The young men were proud to show their prowess in despatching the ugly creature by a quick blow of a club or sickle, or even by snatching it up and dashing it against a tree before it could use its fangs. They would catch one, and play cruel tricks with it, provoking it to try its teeth on a red-hot coal, or holding it down with

a fork and forcing a quid of tobacco into its mouth, a poison which was more deadly to a snake than its own. The worst enemies of the reptile race were the hogs, which, when turned out to root about the woods for subsistence, would eat them without scruple, while their own fat was an effectual protection against the venomous fangs. It was a favourite adventure to destroy notorious dens, in which serpents would be killed by scores; and sometimes, when they had become very troublesome, the people of the district would turn out and have a grand hunt. Hundreds would thus be killed every year in the early days, till they became rarer and rarer, and disappeared altogether. Their place was better taken by the honey-bees and singing-birds, which appear to have been strangers to the dark forests before the coming of the white man, and to have spread their colonies along with his clearings.

There were other natives of the woods that proved long a nuisance to the settlers; not least of these, the pretty little squirrels, black, grey, and brown, which played such mischief among the young corn. In some places a bounty was offered for their scalps as for those of wolves and Indians. Laws were made obliging every male above sixteen to kill a certain number of squirrels and crows annually. When such measures proved insufficient to keep down these petty enemies of human industry, a 'turn out' would be tried from time to time, to make general war against them throughout the district. So late as 1822 a grand battue of this sort, in one county of Ohio, resulted in the slaughter of twenty thousand squirrels, so we may imagine how much powder was burned on this tender and tricky race during the fifty years since they had first been disturbed in their airy fastnesses.

It was many years, of course, before the woods were cleared or even thoroughly explored, so their old inhabitants had a

long notice to quit.¹ Even in this century a traveller through Kentucky has to tell us that on knocking at the door of a cabin, he was amazed to find the good woman rushing out and giving him a hearty embrace! Her house was so secluded that she could not restrain her delight at seeing a stranger. In the early days we can well understand how, even in what passed for a populous neighbourhood, say one house to a mile, visitors were seldom unwelcome, and the worst trouble they caused was by going away.

They were a sociable people these neighbours of the backwoods, though they might live miles apart, for indeed they could not afford to do without each other. It was customary for them to assemble and help one another in turns at house raisings, corn huskings, log rollings, quiltings, or other work where many hands were required; and of course these 'bees' were always the excuse for a feast or a frolic. Or they might be called on to turn out and beat the woods in search of a lost child, perhaps only to find a mangled body, perhaps to get no trace of the little one, whose parents must mourn for weeks in miserable uncertainty. Sometimes they had to work in company for fear of the Indians, with sentries guarding the reapers or mowers. Every able-bodied man had to take his turn in going out to fight when the settlements were threatened. In such mutual services no one could shirk his share, but must lend an active hand at whatever work might be going, or he soon found the neighbourhood unpleasant for him.

¹ Dr. Doddridge says that the disappearance of the wolves went on at a rate not accounted for by the traps and rifles of the hunters. He is inclined to think that a greater number of them were destroyed by hydrophobia than by all other means put together—a disease which, if it once broke out among a pack of wolves, could not fail to work wild havoc. There are cases of men dying in agony after being bitten by wolves which appeared to be mad—a crowning terror of the backwoods. See Washington Irving's *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, vol. ii. chap. iii.

Idleness was not the fashion here. In one rising township a regulation was made that any vagrant who appeared to have no honest occupation should be sold as a slave for a term to the highest bidder. And when a dandified gentleman arrived to exercise his profession as a gambler, he was unceremoniously lodged in jail, and sold to a blacksmith, who chained him to his anvil and made him blow and hammer till he had worked off the price paid for him.

Here and there negro slaves might be found in the backwoods, just as there were a few rich settlers like Sir William Johnson and Lord Fairfax. But almost all the pioneers were men with only their own strong arms and their hearty offspring to help them. Coming into the woods with little wealth but courage and patience, they could become masters of a few hundred acres for the trouble of clearing and cultivating the land, and in a few years would be able to enjoy all the comforts they cared for. The men who thus 'greatly independent lived,' had naturally small respect or even toleration for the elegancies and gentilities of life. To have white hands or useless accomplishments was as great a crime with them as it is to drop an *h* or to carry a parcel in Belgravia.

In such a community, the young people soon grew to make themselves useful. The girls learned to milk, to mind the baby, and to do 'chores' of household work at an age when some children are still busy with their dolls. The boys, like boys elsewhere, were apt to be rather ashamed of these womanly tasks; but they were proud to help their fathers, fetching and carrying, lending a hand in the field or at the wood pile, running fearless and bare-legged through the woods to drive the cattle with their tinkling bells. Sometimes a not too learned adventurer would set up a school in a cabin by the roadside, handy to an unfailing supply of birch bark to be used

as slates, and hickory switches to serve another educational end; and there by 'spells,' when nothing much was doing at home, the youngsters would repair to bawl out their letters in noisy chorus. Even the most elementary schools, however, were as few and far between in the backwoods as idle urchins could have desired. Yet many men who came to be doctors, lawyers, clergymen, statesmen, passed their youth in these circumstances,¹ and found themselves none the worse for this homely and practical training. In after times they could look back with a smile on these early days when they first visited the older settlements, and were astonished at such familiar sights as a church, a stone house, or a flock of geese, like poor little Joseph Doddridge, who on his way to school in Maryland was sorely perplexed by his introduction to *coffee* at a frontier tavern.

'When supper came on, my confusion was worse confounded. A little cup stood in a bigger one with some brownish-looking stuff in it, which was neither milk, hominy, nor broth; what to do with these little cups and the little spoon belonging to them I could not tell, and I was afraid to ask anything concerning the use of them. It was in the time of the war, and the company were giving accounts of catching, whipping, and hanging of Tories. The word jail frequently occurred; this word I had never heard before, but I soon discovered and was much

¹ The Rev. James B. Finley, whose father was a schoolmaster, and who became first a hunter, then a preacher, assures us that as a boy he could repeat whole books of the *Æneid* and the *Iliad*, and could scan Latin and Greek verse as fluently as in his later days. He could sing a hymn, or find the square root of any given number as exactly as he could drive his bullet to the mark! But with all due respect for this excellent missionary, we must doubt the thoroughness of his classical knowledge when we find in his autobiography such a quotation as *Tempora mutantur, nos mutemur cum illis!* The printer, that scapegoat of authors, may be responsible here; but in any case Mr. Finley did work that was worth more than correct syntax.

terrified at its meaning, and supposed we were in much danger of the fate of the Tories, for I thought, as we had come from the backwoods, it was altogether likely that we must be Tories too. For fear of being discovered, I durst not utter a single word. I therefore watched attentively what the big folks would do with their little cups and spoons. I imitated them, and found the taste of the coffee nauseous beyond anything I had ever tasted in my life. I continued to drink as the rest of the company did, with the tears streaming from my eyes; but when it was to end I was at a loss to know, as the little cups were filled immediately after being emptied. This circumstance distressed me very much, as I durst not say I had enough. Looking attentively at the grown persons, I saw one man turn his little cup bottom upwards, and put his little spoon across it. I observed that after this, his cup was not filled again; I followed his example, and to my great satisfaction the result as to my cup was the same.'

But however unfit for polite society they might be, these hardy youths had a learning — accomplishments of their own. Almost as soon as he could toddle, the backwoods boy had a little bow and arrows given him as a congenial plaything, with which he might do his best at guarding the truck patch from birds. By and by he was promoted to a gun, which he was not long in carrying to some purpose. Before a hair showed itself on his smooth cheek, he might have had a shot at a bear or an Indian. The woods were his school and college, in which his senses received an education without which he could scarcely have held his own in that daily struggle for a livelihood. Grammar and spelling he might see little use for; but he was eager enough in learning to steer his way through the pathless forest, to recognise the plants and minerals that might in any strait be serviceable to him, to read as in a book all the signs of earth and sky, to follow the

track of his enemies or his game, to know the ways and imitate the voices of beasts and birds, the bleat of the fawn, the howl of the wolf, the gobble of the turkey, by which these animals might be lured within range of his rifle.

This last sound, by the way, was often used by the Indians as a trick to draw the settlers into danger. There are several stories turning on this device of theirs, as, for instance, this one of which a celebrated Indian-fighter called Jesse Hughes is the hero. One day, when the Indians were suspected to be near the fort, he saw a lad in it eagerly loading his gun, and asked what he meant to do.

'I am going to shoot a turkey that I hear gobbling on the hillside,' was the answer.

Hughes listened, and his keen ear was not deceived. He said he would go and take the shot himself.

'No, you won't!' cried the lad indignantly. 'It's my turkey; I heard it first.'

'Well, you know I am the best shot. I'll go and kill it, and give you the turkey.'

The boy was still scarcely well pleased with this arrangement, but the veteran hunter persuaded him to stay where he was. Hughes then left the fort and cautiously crept through the bushes, making a circuit and coming out behind the spot where the gobbling was going on. There, as he expected, he saw an Indian sitting on a stump, hidden among the brushwood from the sight of any one who should come straight towards him from the fort. A shot was heard, and presently Hughes came back to the boy, who at first was perhaps not ill pleased to see that the turkey had not been secured.

'There, now, you have let it go!' he cried, and thought things would have been otherwise if he had been allowed to try. But he changed his mind, and started to see what he had escaped, when Hughes flung down the Indian's

scalp, saying, 'There, take your turkey, Jim; I don't want it.'

With such training, the young folks were ready to set up for themselves as soon as out of their teens; early marriages and large families were the rule where no crop proved more valuable than that of good arms and legs. A wedding could not but be a welcome event in the backwoods, for this was almost the only social gathering that was all fun and no work to be done to earn a share in the frolic. The guests came from twenty miles round to such an occasion of exhibiting the hospitality in which this people delighted. Not even the fear of the Indians could keep them at home on these occasions. There is a sad story of Southern Virginia which tells how a party, arriving, as they thought, for a marriage, found no sign of festivity, but instead, the ashes of the home and six or seven mangled corpses. The bride herself had been taken away by the Indians. Yet, after all, she escaped, and came back to be hurriedly married over the fresh grave of her parents and friends before her new-made husband set out to avenge their slaughter.

We have from Doddridge and other writers a full description of the proceedings at a pioneer wedding. The bridegroom and his friends set out betimes in procession to the bride's house, all in their best clothes, such as these were, home-spun and home-made. 'If¹ there were any buckles, rings, buttons, or ruffles, they were relics of old times. The horses were caparisoned with old saddles, old bridles or halters, and pack-saddles with a bag or blanket thrown over them; a rope or string as often constituted the girth as a piece of leather.

'The march in double file was often interrupted by the narrowness or obstructions of the horse path, for roads there

¹ Collins' *Historical Sketches of Kentucky*.

were none ; and these difficulties were often increased by the jocularly and sometimes the malice of neighbours, by felling trees and tying grape vines across the way. Sometimes an ambuscade was formed by the wayside, and an unexpected discharge of several guns took place, so as to cover the wedding company with smoke. Let the reader imagine the scene which followed this discharge—the sudden spring of the horses, the shrieks of the girls, and the chivalric bustle of their partners to save them from falling. Sometimes, in spite of all that could be done to prevent it, some were thrown to the ground. If a wrist, elbow, or ankle happened to be sprained, it was tied up with a handkerchief, and little more was thought or said about it.' The journey would end with a race among the young men trying to reach the bride's house first, the winner receiving as prize a bottle of whiskey, with which he returned in triumph to treat the company.

The ceremony was performed by a justice of the peace, if, as was likely in the early days, no parson could be had. But no less essential a part of the proceeding in the eyes of all concerned was the dinner, a most plentiful feast of backwoods cheer—beef, pork, fowls, venison, bear meat, pumpkin pies, 'pone' cakes, fish, fruit, and whatever other dainties might be available in that neighbourhood. The afternoon was passed in athletic sports, where each strapping lad strove to win distinction before his sweetheart, racing, wrestling, jumping, shooting at a mark, throwing the tomahawk, and so forth, with interludes of rough practical joking, and not unfrequently quarrelling, which ended there and then in a fight that was hailed as a favourite feature in the amusements. Later in the day came supper and a dance, and it was a point of honour to keep up the reels and jigs till morning, when the company at last separated, not without fixing another meeting to build a house for the happy couple.

In a complete picture of these homes there would be some ugly lines of sensuality and brutality on which we will not dwell. The worst may be hinted in one word. Whiskey was the first of the luxuries of civilisation to follow the frontiersman into his new life; and in this form it might well be thought here that the devil himself was manifested. But the antidote came hard upon the bane. Before the Puritan and Quaker settlers had time wholly to forget the teaching of their youth, a race of strong-hearted and stout-voiced preachers were seeking the souls that seemed thus lost in the wilderness. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians vied with each other in journeyings and perils among the woods, and found attentive congregations of these men, who, however ignorant they might be of other things, had come at least to know the precariousness and the helplessness of mortal life. A stubborn soil, for the most part, was the rough heart of the backwoodsman, and the instruments that could move it were not always so delicate or so polished as those which the taste of a fashionable city congregation might admire. Much could be said, if this were the place to say it, of harmful and unworthy, as well as beneficial results from the camp meetings and revivals by which the work of evangelization was carried on among the dwellers in the woods. But no one will be too critical of the exciting methods adopted by these early preachers, who knows what that people were, and knows that the Methodist Church, even if it were nothing else, was the first temperance society in America.

Thus the early years went by. Already now the dark tangled thickets are vanishing like clouds, and, as man and time triumph over nature, lo! the hoary trunks appear in other shapes.

‘The shapes arise!

'The shapes, measured, sawed, jacked, joined, stained.

'The coffin shape for the dead to lie within in his shroud.

'The shape got out in posts, in the bedstead posts, in the posts of the bride's bed.

'The shape of the little trough, the shape of the rockers beneath, the shape of the babe's cradle.

'The shape of the floor planks, the floor planks for dancers' feet.

'The shape of the planks for the family home, the home of the friendly parents and children.

'The shape of the roof of the home of the happy young man and woman—the roof over the well-married young man and woman.

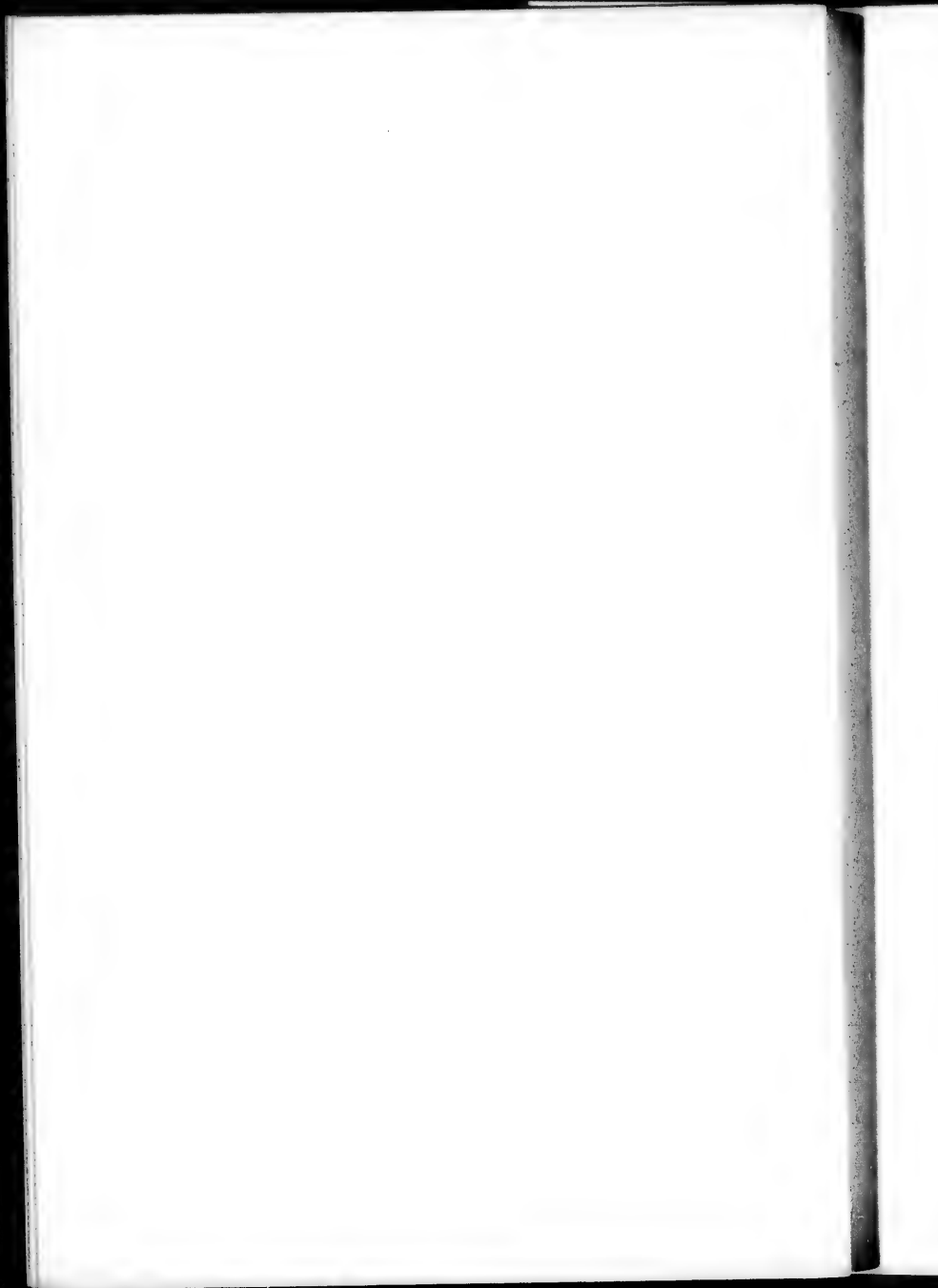
'The roof over the supper joyously cooked by the chaste wife, and joyously eaten by the chaste husband, content after his day's work.'

Churches, schools, printing-offices, stores, mills, court-houses, taverns, bridges, orchards, how fast they sprang up, where a few years before had been the dens of wild beasts and the camp of the prowling Indian! But these young trees did not always bear fruit for those who had planted them. The true pioneer, like Daniel Boone, shrank from the neighbourhood of civilisation rather than from that of the savage. He was a restless being, whose daily bread must be spiced for him by adventures and not by cooks. As soon as firewood could be seen to grow scarcer and chimneys more common, he began to think of gathering his little belongings, leaving his home, and moving westward after the Indians and the game, to make new clearings in what now became the backwoods.

Part II.

THE RED MEN.

'Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like,
I beheld our nations scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other ;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woeful,
Like the cloud rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of autumn.'



CHAPTER I.

REALITY AND ROMANCE.



MOST of us have some time in our youth been ardent students of a kind of popular literature in which the Red Indian figures largely; but if asked to sum up our impressions of this attractive hero, few, probably, could go beyond such items as a dusky skin, high cheek-bones, dark piercing eyes, coarse black hair, muscular limbs more or less naked, a blanket and war paint, perhaps a few feathers twisted in the

scalp lock, and the never-failing tomahawk and deadly rifle. In these chapters it is hoped to give a somewhat clearer and fuller idea of the native of the backwoods, of his home, his amusements, his customs, in what way he grew up and made love as well as war, and died and was buried, how he dealt with his friends and his enemies. and how he looked and thought and behaved himself in that considerable portion of his time which was not spent in scalping or being scalped.

The learned in such matters are now somewhat sceptical of the many theories by which it has been attempted to make the red men descend from any stock but their own ; some even go the length of holding it just as likely that our ancestors were Indians, as that theirs came from any part of Asia or Europe. The bow-and-arrow people, as it has been proposed to call the natives of America, with their hundreds or rather thousands of kindred languages and dialects, seem to have belonged to the same family of the human race,¹ and that is all that can be said with any confidence about their origin. The first white visitors found them in very various degrees of civilisation, from the great empires of Mexico and Peru, down to the miserable root-grubbing tribes, that among the valleys of the Rocky Mountains led a life scarcely higher than that of the beasts. Some had settled towns and tilled fields ; some wandered about without any means of subsistence but hunting and fishing ; some supported themselves partly by agriculture and partly by the chase, and this last was the condition of the backwoods Indians with whom we had to do. They lived in villages or bands, large or small according as the country yielded them food ; and these bands made part of a tribe, the best known and politically the most important division of the Indian world. Though to the white man one Indian might look much like another, there were peculiarities of dress, paint, and bearing through which they did not fail to know and be known by each other for a Huron, a Miami, or a Chippeway, as the case might be, just as a Campbell could recognise a Macgregor by his tartan, and as a Cockney pot-boy is at a glance to be distinguished from a Devonshire ploughman.

A deeply-rooted devotion to their country, with its vaguely-

¹ The Esquimaux are probably the only exception ; they are supposed to have emigrated from the coast of Asia.

defined and often-shifting boundaries, is naturally not so much marked among the Indians; but to their tribe they were attached by all, and more than all, the pride of the most ardent patriotism. The names of many of these tribes, on translation, turn out to mean *the* men or the men of men, as if there were no other men in the world worth mentioning. The community that arrogated to itself such a lofty appellation might amount to less than the population of an English village, and might not be able to send a couple of hundred men into the field; yet each member of it would be as firmly convinced as any citizen of Rome or son of Britain that his people were the very cream of the human race and the centre of the world's affairs. Pride of this kind was of course mainly dependent on ignorance; a very little knowledge of the world would have been fatal to it. We may fancy how difficult it must have been for an Indian to conceal his astonishment when visiting for the first time a civilised state, and seeing myriads of people, thousands of soldiers, and hundreds of ships, each big enough to swallow up the whole of his boasted tribe. The son of the forest, however, has been known not only to keep his countenance unmoved under such circumstances, but even to cling to his high idea of himself and his own people. It is said that when some Indians of the Sac tribe were brought to New York and treated to the novel spectacle of a man going up in a balloon, this man's courage inspired them with the highest admiration, which one of them expressed by saying, '*He must be a Sac!*'

The peculiar polysynthetic character of Indian speech, in which each word is rather a sentence of several syllables rolled together, lends itself readily to contractions and changes of pronunciation. All languages, indeed, without the restraints of writing and spelling, are liable to the same corruption, as shown in the illiterate horse-hirer's bill, quoted by

more than one philologist: *anosafada*, that is, 'a horse half a day,' so much; *takinonimom*, 'taking him home,' so much. These curious phrases might almost stand for a specimen of some Indian tongue, the sounds of which have a tendency to run together in their long compound words with unusual rapidity; so, when a tribe split into two parts, living in different parts of the country, only a few generations would pass before they found it hard to understand each other's dialect. This explains the enormous variety of Indian languages. But what the Indians wanted in knowledge of speech, when strange tribes met, they made up by a wonderful skill in the use of signs. The signs for eating and drinking are much the same everywhere, and a clenched hand pressed to the heart might easily be interpreted as an expression of love. But beyond such elements of the sign language, these people had a whole dictionary of gestures and attitudes by which they could keep up an intelligent conversation on a tolerably wide range of subjects. Thus, for example, the hand laid on the mouth meant astonishment; two forefingers extended like horns stood for a buffalo; and the motion as of drawing a knife across the throat was the recognised way of alluding to the Sioux Indians, by whom this tribute to their talents was no doubt taken as a high compliment.

The countless Indian tribes have been grouped into several main stocks, having nearly-related languages and answering to such divisions as those of the Latin and Teutonic peoples of Europe. The Indians of the northern backwoods and the lakes mostly belonged to that which is called the Algonquin stock. The one exception is the great Iroquois race, which, firmly established between Pennsylvania and Lake Ontario, had by their character and prowess won a pre-eminence over their neighbours, like that of the Spartans at one time in ancient Greece, or of the Sikhs among the more effeminate

natives of Hindostan. And if we speak of the ruin brought upon the Indians by the white men, it should not be forgotten that when these latter first appeared upon the field, the Iroquois were in a fair way of exterminating their neighbours on all sides ; so that, if left to themselves, it is not impossible that the natives would have killed one another off even faster than they perished through the means of the invaders.

This people owed their supremacy not only to their martial nature, but to their political organization, in which, as in other respects, they were far before all the Indians of that part of America. While the other petty tribes lived in a state of perpetual jealousy and discord with each other, the celebrated Six Nations—five nations in earlier times—of the Iroquois, lying side by side in the forests of New York, were bound together by a confederacy not unlike the States and Union of the American Republic, in which each was able to manage its own affairs, and yet all might unite for objects of common interest. It is easy to see at what advantage this confederacy put all its members. Among their other achievements they very nearly missed driving the French out of Canada ; and it was lucky for the English settlements that these redoubtable nations were generally our allies. As soon as they had got the use of firearms, the Iroquois extirpated, one after another, the four strong tribes round about them. These tribes were of their own race ; and the weaker Algonquins had still less chance of making a successful resistance. The nearer tribes submitted and paid tribute ; the farther ones lived in constant terror of the Iroquois war parties, against whom distance was no protection. On the prairies of the west, among the hills of the east, in the cane swamps of the south, there could be no saying where they would not turn up, hundreds of miles from home ; and the warrior of a less martial race has been known to fly before a pack of wolves

or a row of stumps, which his excited mind might take for the all-destroying Mohawks ; for as the Iroquois were the flower of the Indian race, so the Mohawks seem to have been considered the *elite* of the Iroquois. Yet it is probable that the fighting force of the whole confederacy never exceeded more than two or three thousand men, or four thousand at the most ; and even these numbers were only maintained by the practice of adopting many of the prisoners made in war.¹

His totem was another proud distinction of the Indian ; it was practically his family name. The tribes were divided into hereditary clans, each bearing the name of some animal as their fabulous ancestor. The number and names of these clans varied ; some of the Iroquois nations had as many as eight. Thus, among the Senecas there were the Bear, Wolf, Turtle, Beaver, Deer, Snipe, Heron, and Hawk totems. The Bear, the Wolf, and the Turtle were held in special honour, and all the Mohawks bore one of these totems, by which, besides the bonds of the confederacy, they were laced together with the corresponding clans of the other nations.

Each such clan seems to have held property in common, to have had councils and chiefs of its own, and in fact to have been a tribe within a tribe. The totem was a close bond, even between the members of different tribes. The bearers of the same totem looked on themselves as members of one

¹ The original Five Nations were the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, the Senecas, names all preserved in the geography of the districts once inhabited by them. Onondago, near the modern Syracuse, was the capital of the league, so to speak, where the deputies from each nation met to hold their congress. In the early part of last century, the kindred tribe of the Tuscaroras, removing from the south, was admitted to this union, which then became the *Six Nations*. The Wyandots, so often figuring in border wars, belonged to the same stock, being a remnant of the once flourishing Huron nation. They, however, had no political connection with the Iroquois proper, their own inveterate enemies, and the destroyers of their forefathers.

family. No Bear might marry in the Bear clan. If a Wolf were injured, all the Wolves were bound to avenge him. Wherever a Beaver found himself among Beavers, he might reckon on being treated as if at home. This curious institution has been shown to correspond to the old Roman *gentes*, and though it may not be proved to have existed in all the Indian tribes, traces of it, at least, were found among those whose names are most familiar to us. The figure of the animal was sometimes, though not always, tattooed on the body, and it served the Indians for a seal or crest. A treaty with the whites would be signed by curious scrawls representing various birds, beasts, and reptiles, which were, in fact, the totems of the chiefs concerned.

The common Indian custom being to look on a boy or girl rather as the child of its mother than of its father, the totem-ship, in most tribes, came from the female side. Thus, the children of a Bear warrior and a Beaver squaw would be not Bears, but Beavers by birth. Then besides the totem, which was never changed, each Indian had a name of his own bestowed on him in his infancy by his parents or the elders of the tribe, chosen generally, it would appear, from a stock of hereditary names belonging to his mother's family, which were given to only one person at a time, and were not lightly given when the previous owner had rendered them illustrious.

The whole subject of Indian names is somewhat obscure, for a reason connected with one of their extraordinary superstitions. It seems to have been frequently the case that they were at pains to hide their real name from a white man, believing that this knowledge would give him some mysterious power of bewitching them. Sometimes, as they grew up, a boy or girl would acquire some expressive nickname of endearment or contempt,—such as 'Little Red-head,' 'Swift-as-the-Wind,' and so forth,—and this might cling to them.

through life, as with some of our old Jacks and Jennies. Then when the young Indian distinguished himself in war or the chase, he was not unlikely to be rewarded with a title of honour celebrating his exploits, in which for the future his old name would be sunk, as our surname of Snooks might be in the title of Baron Money-bags. So also when he had disgraced some noble appellation, borne by a hero of times past, he would be stripped of it by the indignant scorn of his family, and obliged to accept in its stead a meaner sobriquet by which no old associations could be shamed. The chiefs, too, soon fell into a fashion of copying the nomenclature of Europeans, who, for their part, encouraged the use of names spellable and pronounceable; so that Joseph Brant abroad was *Thayendanege* at home, and a chief who rejoiced in the designation of *Cochquacawkaghton* among his own strong-jawed people, strutted among his white neighbours under the style and title of Captain White-eyes. In short, an Indian was in the way of having as many aliases as a burglar; and for a stranger to ask him bluntly what his real name might be, was considered a rude handling of a delicate subject, to be expected only from such unmannerly Yahoos as the people who had godfathers and godmothers.

What are we to say about the Red Indian's character, on which so much has been said? We cannot do better than hear what Francis Parkman has to say, one of the few writers on the Indians qualified for the task both by the abilities of a scholar and by personal experience of their wigwams and wandering adventures. 'By the rhapsodies of poets, the cant of sentimentalists, and the extravagance of some who should have known better, a counterfeit image has been tricked out, which might seek in vain for its likeness through every corner of the habitable earth—an image bearing no more resemblance to its original than the monarch of the tragedy and the hero

of the epic poem bear to their living prototypes in the palace and the camp. The shadows of his wilderness home, and the darker mantle of his own inscrutable reserve, have made the Indian warrior a wonder and a mystery. Yet, to the eye of rational observation, there is nothing unintelligible in him. He is full, it is true, of contradiction; he deems himself the centre of greatness and renown; his pride is proof against the fiercest torments of fire and steel, and yet the same man would beg for a dram of whiskey, or pick up a crust of bread thrown to him like a dog from the tent of the traveller. At one moment he is wary and cautious to the verge of cowardice; at the next, he abandons himself to a very insanity of recklessness, and the habitual self-restraint which throws an impenetrable veil over emotion is joined to the wild, impetuous passions of a beast or a madman.'

This word *contradiction* seems the only key-note to the Indian nature. In the simple life of the forest there flourished many wild virtues and graces, the report of which caused some stay-at-home philosophers of the last century to talk much nonsense about primeval innocence and the noble savage. But when two French moralists of this school, sailing down the Ohio, met a canoe full of warriors, and, out of faith in their native goodness, invited them on board, the first thing the unsophisticated children of nature did was to scalp the too trusting philosophers. On the other hand, many tales of a different tenor might be told, notably from the experience of the Quakers, who found that, in the long run, the red men were not insensible to peaceful and friendly intentions.

In short, the Indian is not unlike other people in having his good points and his bad ones, and in his case, indeed, it is singularly hard to make the truth square with any imaginary pattern that may be put to stand for his character. We need not always agree with the romancers who have seen nothing

in him but his picturesque features; nor must we always accept the prejudices of those who had reason to look on him mainly as a thief and a murderer. We shall sometimes find him acting with the magnanimity of a hero, and sometimes with the brutality of a beast of prey. There were Indians and Indians; and as for the race in general, there have been better races and there have been worse ones. In some points they often put the white men to shame; in others they had certainly much to learn from us and too little will to learn it. But what were the common broad traits of Indian life and nature are to be gathered from the following pages better than they can be summed up in a paragraph.

And yet we can find no more fitting preface to the reality than in a piece of romance unsurpassable by the invention of any writer. Among the many great Indian chiefs, the memory of whom is embalmed for us in song and story, there is one whose character and fate have been invested with a special interest, as affording a type of the highest qualities and the most pitiable misfortunes of his people. This man may truly be called a native nobleman. And in all the annals of Indian warfare, there is nothing more pathetic than the oft-told tale of how Logan's life was embittered, and his hand turned against the friends of his youth.

The father of Logan was a Cayuga chief who had come under the influence of the Christian missionaries, and testified his good-will to the white men by giving his son the English name which has become so well known. The boy thus christened grew up a man to do honour to any godfather. By birth a member of the proud confederacy of the Six Nations, he might have sat as a model for that ideal Indian whose virtues have been less remarked in real life than on the page of fiction. Handsome and athletic, renowned as an orator, a

skilled marksman, and a brave warrior, he added to the dignified simplicity and noble bearing of the free son of the forest, a high-mindedness and sensibility worthy of the most civilised race. At a time when most Indians were held by their white neighbours as little better than utter barbarians, his honesty and humanity seemed to have been recognised by all with whom he came in contact during his early life.

One instance of this may be mentioned out of several to the same purport. He had learned not to avenge petty grievances by the rude justice of the tomahawk, and when visiting the house of a magistrate of the district, to seek redress for an injury done him by one of the settlers, he took notice of a little girl that was just learning to walk, and heard the mother complain that she could not get a pair of shoes for her. Soon afterwards Logan came and asked to be allowed to take the child to his wigwam. At this proposal the mother was in no small perplexity. She would as lief have trusted her darling to a very fiend as to an ordinary Indian, but Logan's disposition was so well known that she ended by giving her consent. It was early morning when he carried the child away, and at sunset he brought her back with a pair of tiny moccasins on her feet, which he had worked and ornamented with his own hands. Such a man was no common savage, and it could have been no slight cause that stirred him into a thirst for the blood of his old allies and associates.

The young chief was brought up on the beautiful banks of the Susquehannah, but about the year 1772 returned to the Ohio valley and made his camp fire among the Delawares and the Shawnees, with which latter tribe he was connected by marriage. His arrival was at an unfortunate juncture. The tide of westward emigration had just touched this rich and tempting district; the rude pioneers of civilisation were coming into collision with the owners of the soil, who, not

unnaturally, were unwilling to see their hunting grounds encroached upon by the conquering axe and spade. As usual, injuries and reprisals, complaints and quarrels, on either side provoked a state of feeling in which the white men confused their red neighbours in one common hatred, and were too ready to learn from them a lesson of indiscriminate and passionate bloodshed. Logan, who in the former Indian wars had hitherto played no part but that of a peacemaker, was now to learn revengeful fury from the people who professed to be followers of a religion of love. Little true religion, indeed, was there in the hearts of these hardy backwoodsmen, too restless and adventurous to live quietly in the older settlements, where land enough to feed a whole nation was still waiting to be reclaimed from the wilderness.

It is hard for us to enter into the merits of a ceaseless dispute arising from the difference of interest and aims between the two peoples. But it must be confessed, that if the Indians defended their rights with barbarity, the English had too often no reason to boast on the score of humanity. We may understand, if we cannot excuse, how, maddened by stealthy raids resulting in the death or captivity of their dearest friends, and the destruction of the property which they had gained with such peril, toil, and hardship, they came to look on every red man as an enemy beyond the pale of good faith or mercy. Under the influence of these feelings, a number of Indians were now murdered with circumstances of special cruelty and treachery. Among the victims were the family of Logan.

The whole nature of this chief henceforth appeared to be changed. He whom the missionaries had found an attentive and friendly listener to plans for the elevation of his race, and the mutual good understanding of both peoples, was now hideous with war paint, and furious for revenge. He summoned the braves of the tribes among whom he lived, always

eager to follow any daring leader who promised them glory and booty, and none the less eager when that leader was of the redoubtable race of the Iroquois. Soon a number of scalping parties burst unexpectedly upon various points of the scattered settlements, spreading fear and misery wherever they came, slaughtering and plundering every white family, whether innocent or guilty of the crimes which had thus roused them to write their wrongs in letters of fire and blood.

These attacks were often headed by Logan himself, whose name became a terror along the frontier where he had once been known as a friend. He seemed to be possessed by a demon, inspiring him with an unquenchable thirst for the lives of that race by which his home had been made desolate. Yet it is recorded that he interfered to mitigate the horrors of the torture inflicted by the Indians upon white prisoners, and once rescued with his own hand a victim already bound to the stake. Such a character as his could find no delight in these scenes of inhuman atrocity, the worst features of which about this time began to disappear among the tribes brought in contact with Europeans.

All the summer this war raged through the lovely straths of the Ohio. In autumn, Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, having called out the militia, marched with a strong force into the Indian country. The red warriors, held together by no strong government and no far-sighted policy, failed to withstand a regular army of men who both understood the nature of the country and Indian warfare, and had the advantage of military discipline. After being defeated in a desperate battle, the tribes sued for peace.

Logan did not appear at the council in which the treaty was made. His proud heart was broken; he could not face the conquerors, his former allies, but stayed sorrowful and solitary in his wigwam. There a messenger sought him out to ask if

he agreed to the conditions of peace, and to this messenger he is said to have unbosomed himself, with a burst of tears, in the celebrated speech which especially is associated with his name :—

‘I appeal to any white man to say if ever he entered Logan’s cabin hungry, and I gave him no meat ; if ever he came cold or naked, and I gave him not clothing.

‘During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained in his tent an advocate for peace. Nay, such was my love for the whites, that those of my own country pointed at me as they passed by and said, “Logan is the friend of white men.”

‘I had even thought to live with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresap, the last spring, in cool blood and unprovoked, cut off all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children.

‘There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any human creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country I rejoice at the beams of peace ; but do not think that mine is the joy of fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan ? Not one.’

This simple and touching tale, when reported in the victorious army, attracted immediate attention. Even if it owed something to the rhetoric of the translator, the sentiment of it was painfully natural ; and as it spread from mouth to mouth through the country, it was felt by thoughtful minds to be a too true epitome of the wrongs not alone of Logan, but of all his race. Published in Jefferson’s *Notes on Virginia*, it obtained a wider currency, and became a commonplace of the school and platform. Thus it has come to be a model of native eloquence, and one of these memorable traits which have

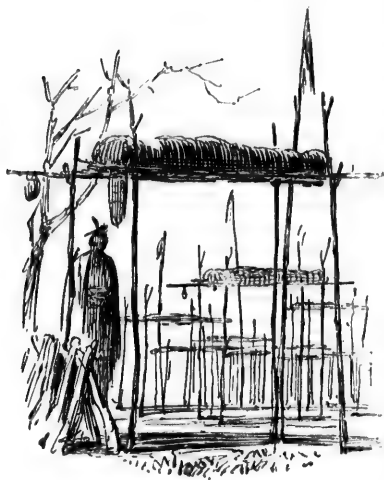
helped to give a too high idea of the Indian character to a generation that never heard the blood-curdling war-whoop, or feared to see wife and child lying mangled on the ashes of their home.

It would have been well for the fame of the hero if his story had closed with this best known incident of it. The little remnant of his blasted life is hidden in obscurity or in a deeper shadow. The wandering hunter leaves a doubtful trail in history, but, if tradition may be trusted, Logan's fate was a most sad one. Driven from his home, bereft of his kindred, seeing the conquerors push their way more and more surely into the land of his fathers, he lingered out a few years among his doomed people. In early life he had recognised and protested against the evils of drink, an enemy far more fatal to the Indians than the swords and rifles of the white men. But now, it is said, he was fain to drown his bitter memories in the maddening and debasing habit which he had once held in horror. Thus he became the ruin of his former self. A hopeless and degraded wretch, he went from tribe to tribe, till in Michigan he was treacherously murdered by an Indian to whom he had given some offence.



CHAPTER II.

INDIAN LIFE.



THE nature of the Indian had more kindness than those would have readily given him credit for who only knew him in his war-paint. Even those who saw him by his fireside might well have been deceived, for, trained to be ashamed of the display of all tender emotion, he indulged in few words or signs of affection, and when he returned from a long absence, would sit silently

down in his wigwam, wrapping himself in reserve as in a blanket, and taking no more notice of his family than if he had just parted from them. Beneath all this hypocrisy of coldness and indifference, however, there burned a human enough heart, which has been aptly compared to a volcano covered with snow. Of his courtesy and consideration towards his wife, perhaps the less said the better: woman's rights

are unknown in a state of society where all rights must be held by force ; yet a certain degree of true love and tenderness is not inconsistent with domestic despotism. He was not an unkind father, and though he thought it beneath his dignity as a warrior to show much attention to the little ones, he was careful for their real welfare, as he understood it. Not seldom there were cases where all his stoicism could no longer serve him, and his stern bearing would melt into tears, kisses, and embraces over the child snatched from peril or doomed to destruction. Travellers found here, as elsewhere, that there was no surer road to the heart of a mother, and a father too, than a few caresses bestowed on the youngsters.

One who was brought up among the Indians, and lived with them almost all his life, bears witness : 'If a warrior has lost by death a favourite child, he carries, if possible, some article of dress, or perhaps some toy which belonged to the child, or more commonly a lock of his hair which they seek to throw away on the field of battle. The scouts who precede a war party into an enemy's country, if they happen in lurking about their lodges, or in their old encampments, to discover any of the toys that have been dropped by the children, such as little bows, or even a piece of a broken arrow, pick it up and carefully preserve it till their return to their party ; then, if they know of a man who has lost his child, they throw it to him, saying, "Your little son is in that place : we saw him playing with the children of our enemies ; will you go and see him ?" The bereaved father commonly takes it up, and having looked at it awhile, falls to crying, and is then ready and eager to go against the enemy.'¹

Even had these parents lacked affection, they held the strength and glory of their tribe too much at heart to neglect the children in whom lay its future. Great pains were taken

¹Elwin James' *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner.*

to train the rising generation. The Indian ideas of education were the same as those of a French writer who pronounces that it should be warm and hard, not cold and soft. For the first years, the care of children was entirely the business of the mother ; and she was likely to have so much on hand as to have little time for petting and dandling, though the time of weaning was often long delayed, and a sturdy urchin of seven or eight might be seen turning aside from his rough sports to refresh himself at his mother's breast. The new-born infant was swathed in skins and strapped, by belts or strips of bark, to a flat piece of board in the shape of a coffin, so that nothing was visible of it but the head, which was protected by a hoop of wood, and its restless limbs were out of all mischief. In this cradle case, warmly stuffed with moss or sawdust, it could be slung on the back of the mother by a broad carrying-strap passing over her forehead, or hung upon a tree when she was occupied, or simply set up against the wall of the wigwam ; and thus left to indulge its thoughts and emotions, it had every opportunity of learning betimes how little is to be got in this world by crying for it.

As soon as the baby could toddle without risk of misshapen limbs, it was left very much to nature, who deals so kindly with her naked nurslings. From the first it was accustomed to be washed in cold water, to harden the body ; as for clothes, unless in very severe weather, it was scarcely troubled with them ;¹ it got a fair share of whatever food might be going ; and it was of course unafflicted by lessons, but allowed to run about at will in the open air among its tawny-limbed contemporaries.

Yet, and especially in the case of boys, the parent's eye was quick to watch for the early promise of savage virtues, and care was taken to nip in the bud any sign of qualities unbe-

¹ Indian children are often seen with nothing on *but a belt*.

coming the future warrior; the mother who should rear a coward or a cripple would herself be shamed in the eyes of the whole tribe. John D. Hunter, who was brought up in captivity among the Indians, tells us how an Indian matron, like the mother of the Gracchi, was proud to be accompanied by her boys in all visits, and deeply mortified if her friend's brats got the better of her own in the squabbles which came natural to them on such occasions. 'They are seldom long together without quarrelling, and pretty generally make a bold fight, though they are not permitted to continue it: should the case be otherwise, the disappointed mother soon returns to her lodge, and then commences an extraordinary discipline. She begins by placing a rod in his hand, assists him to beat and make flee the dog, or anything else that may come in his way, and then encourages him to pursue. An adept in this, she teases and vexes him, creates an irritable temper, submits to the rod, and flees before him with great apparent dread. When skilled in this branch, she strikes him with her hand, pulls his hair, etc., which her now hopeful boy retaliates in a spiteful and *becoming* manner. Some time having passed in this way, by which her pupil has learned to bear pain without dread, she takes him again on a visit, and I have never known an instance of a second disappointment in these trials of courage. They are then permitted to play with the other children of the village, and to quarrel and make up as well as they can.' When this is what Indian boys are taught in the nursery, while our well-regulated young persons are learning the multiplication table and reading *Sandford and Merton*, we need not wonder that the child should be fatter to the war-loving man.

As the urchins grew older, their pugnacious disposition was all the more encouraged, and now the men would show an interest and act the umpire in their encounters. When such

fight came off, the English observers were perhaps not so much astonished as the French missionaries to observe how the bystanders made a ring 'and looked on without taking any part but to see fair play.' The result of this training is said to have been on the whole not so unfavourable to peace and order as might be supposed. As in our public schools in the old day, each Indian was tolerably well able to gauge his fellow's prowess, and did not enter lightly upon a quarrel which was sure to be taken up; while public opinion, to some extent, was exercised to check bullying and overbearing. Their vices were at least not those of cowards.

After all we have heard of the stern ferocity of the red man, we might expect to find his sons kept in order by severe and brutal punishments. But so far was this from being the case, that among the most spirited tribes the use of the rod was held the surest way of spoiling the child. Indeed, the grim warrior, whose dearest pastime was the suffering and slaughter of his foes, often displayed on this point a sentimental trait of character which not a little astonished the white men at a time when unbounded credit was given to Solomon's rule of family discipline.

Father Le Jeune tells a story of some Indians paying a visit to Quebec, when a saucy drummer boy struck one of them on the face with his drumstick so hard as to draw blood. The victim of this rough joke was naturally offended, and to satisfy his wounded feelings, the scapegrace was ordered to have a whipping. 'They accordingly had the boy brought out to receive the punishment; but when the Indians saw that the French were in earnest, and were stripping and preparing to flog this little beater of savages and of drums, they began immediately to beg that he might be pardoned, saying that the boy was too young to know what he was about. But as our people still continued their preparations to punish him,

one of the Indians suddenly stripped himself, and threw his robe over the boy, crying out to the man who was going to flog him, "Scourge me if you choose, but do not strike the boy." Thus the youth escaped. None of the savages, as we are informed, can chastise, or bear to see chastised, any child. This,' says the Jesuit seriously, 'will make trouble for us in the design we have to teach their youth.'

We must not be unfair to the Jesuits; they were before the other schoolmasters of their time in the use of reasonable means of instruction. But almost all schoolmasters then, and long after then, thought themselves, without instruments of correction, as unfurnished for their office as a hunter would be in the woods without his rifle. A dominie sent by Sir William Johnson to teach the young Mohawks, dolefully reports to his employer that the work of education is at a standstill, since the parents of his pupils will hear of neither birch nor cane, nor ferule, any more than the pupils themselves approved of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Colonel James Smith, in the story of his captivity, relates that when the Indian with whom he lived gave a thrashing to one of his step-sons, eight years old, the boy's mother was so indignant that she straightway packed up all her share of the family property, and eloped to her own friends. In this tribe, the Wyandots, the customary mode of correction was by ducking in cold water; so that, as Smith observed, the young folks were more careful to behave themselves well in winter than in summer. But it is clear that punishment had no great part in the management of the 'high-toned' wigwam; and when we read of Indian youngsters being whipped for playing mischievous tricks, or plundering a melon patch, their parents will probably be found to have come into contact with the white people, and acquired a certain tincture of the amenities of civilisation. Even then the Huron or Mohawk

paterfamilias seems to have been readier to beat his wife than his children.

We occasionally, indeed, hear of another peculiar form of chastisement used in some tribes. Young men and boys who had made themselves troublesome or got into disgrace, were severely scratched with a tooth of a serpent, or that of a fish called the *gar*. The tribe by whom John M'Cullough was adopted rejoiced in a severe disciplinarian, named Mos-sooh-whese, who felt a vocation to keep the young people in order by means of this instrument of correction. The white boy once got into what may be truly called a *scrape* with him, and his account of the matter is worth quoting, for a glimpse into the details of juvenile Indian naughtiness, not so different, after all, from that of our own idle youngsters. Their ideas of justice, however, seem strange. It will be noticed that 'telling' is put forward as a virtue; and when the real culprit cannot be laid hands on, his brother will do as well!

'It happened once,' says M'Cullough, 'that a nephew of his, a very mischievous boy, threw the entrails of a turtle in my face, then ran off as quick as he could from me round the house. I picked up a stone, and pursued him, and threw it after him; it happened to light on the top of his head, and knocked him down, and cut his head badly, or it is probable he would have concealed it, as he well knew what the consequence would be, for his back, arms, thighs, and legs were almost constantly raw by the frequent punishments he got for his mischief.

'However, Mos-sooh-whese happened to be out a-fishing at the time; he was informed when he came home of what had taken place. I was apprehensive of what would be my doom, and was advised by my friends to hide myself. Accordingly, I got into a small addition to the house, where a number of bales of deerskin and fur were piled up. I had not been long

there until I heard him inquiring for me. They told him that I had gone down to the creek, and was not returned yet. He therefore ordered one of my brothers (who had been with him fishing the day before) to stand up until he would score him. As my brother was partly man grown, he refused; a struggle ensued. However, my brother was obliged to give up. The reason he gave for punishing others who were not present at the time the mischief was done, was that if they should be present at the time that any one was promoting mischief, he should do his best to prevent it, or inform against those who had done it, as the informer was always exempt from the punishment aforesaid.

‘I then heard him say that if I was to stay away a year, he would score me; he then went to the creek on the hunt of me. After he was gone, they told me I might as well come out as conceal myself; accordingly I did. In a short time he came back, grinning and showing his teeth as if he had got a prize. He ordered me to stand up at the side of a post; I obeyed his orders. He then took and wet my thighs and legs, to prevent the skin from tearing. He took the gar’s bill and gave me four scores or scrapes with it, from the point of the hip down to the heel, the mark of which I will carry to my grave.’

It should be added that when McCullough’s eldest brother came home, he was highly incensed at hearing of what had been done, and threatened to score Mos-sooh-whese’s head with his tomahawk the next time he meddled with any of his family.

Both children and men were far more afraid of shame than punishment. Young Smith had a taste of the Indian method of reprimanding, when, on throwing down his heavy burden in despair, his captors only laughed at him and added his load to that of a young squaw who had already as much to carry

as himself—a reproof, he declares, which did more to excite him to exertion than if he had been whipped for laziness. It was on emulation, then, not fear, that the Indians chiefly relied to foster their favourite virtues in the young, who needed no better inducement to courage and fortitude than the example of their elders. The boy soon came to understand that nothing could be finer than to bear pain and hunger and fatigue like a man; in the same way, the girl took her lesson of docility and usefulness. So these young Spartans would delight to play with red-hot cinders, challenging one another to contests of scorching; they would bathe in water where the ice had to be broken; they would trudge all day without food or rest and never complain; and as mere children they have been known to bear severe surgical operations and frightful tortures without a sign of wincing or whimpering.

In the wise economy of nature, this love of endurance, so necessary for the man, belongs to the nature of the healthy-minded boy; so, too, by sports which did not differ much from those of young people all the world over, the growing Indians unconsciously trained their limbs, hands, and eyes to serve them in the needs of after life. Yet in their games, it might be observed that they played silently, schooled even then to restrain the boisterous mirth natural to childhood, and to be as agile and also as voiceless as young fawns. Nor was it neglected to impart to them what passed for useful knowledge. They were early practised in the songs and dances of the tribe, and the boys spent much time under the care of instructors who had taken out many a bloody diploma, learning but too willingly to raise the war-whoop, to shoot at a mark, to throw the tomahawk, to follow a trail, to study the habits and imitate the cries of beasts and birds.

When Catlin was residing among the Mandans, he had an

opportunity of inspecting one of their national schools. Before breakfast, he tells us, 'during the pleasant mornings of the summer, the little boys between the ages of seven and fifteen are called out, to the number of several hundreds, and being divided into two companies, each of which is headed by some experienced warrior, who leads them on in the character of a teacher, they are led out into the prairie at sunrise, where this curious discipline is regularly taught them. Their bodies are naked, and each one has a little bow in his left hand and a number of arrows made of large spears of grass which are harmless in their effects. Each one has also a little belt or girdle around his waist, in which he carries a knife made of a piece of wood, and equally harmless; on the top of their heads are slightly attached small tufts of grass, which answer as scalps; and in this plight they follow the dictates of their experienced leaders, who lead them through the judicious evolutions of Indian warfare, of feints, of retreats, of attacks, and at last to a general fight. Many manœuvres are gone through, and eventually they are brought up face to face, within fifteen or twenty feet of each other, with their leaders at their head stimulating them on. Their bows are bent upon each other and their missiles flying, whilst they are dodging and fending them off. If any one is struck with an arrow on any vital part of his body, he is obliged to fall, and his adversary rushes up to him, places his foot on him, and snatching from his belt his wooden knife, grasps hold of his victim's scalp lock of grass, and making a feint at it with his wooden knife, twitches it off and puts it in his belt, and enters again into the ranks and front of the battle.'

No doubt a more agreeable way of spending an hour or two than over the *peripatetic* *peripatetic*, but it is sad to think of such grim lessons being learned in the innocent mirth of childish play. Nor was this the worst, for to bring the young

folks up with a becoming taste for blood and agony, it was they who were often put forward to try their prentice hands at the torturing of some luckless prisoner, whose sufferings would be prolonged under their feeble blows.

When the Virginians, fancying they were about to confer a mighty favour, offered to educate some of the youth of the Six Nations at the College of Williamsburg, the proposal was declined in a characteristic speech of polite irony, which has been preserved for us by Dr. Franklin. 'Some of our young people have already been brought up at your colleges,' said the Indian orator. 'They were instructed in all your sciences, but when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly; were therefore fit neither for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors: they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it; and to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make *men* of them.'

The future hunter and warrior was soon apprenticed to the business of life. With a little bow and arrows he was sent out to try his luck and skill, and as soon as he proved himself a promising marksman, he would be rewarded by being allowed to carry a gun, a treasure more ardently desired than ever was watch or pony by an English lad; then, when his limbs were long and stout enough, he assumed the blanket, as a savage *toga virilis*, answering to the tailed coat and stand-up collars of our youth.

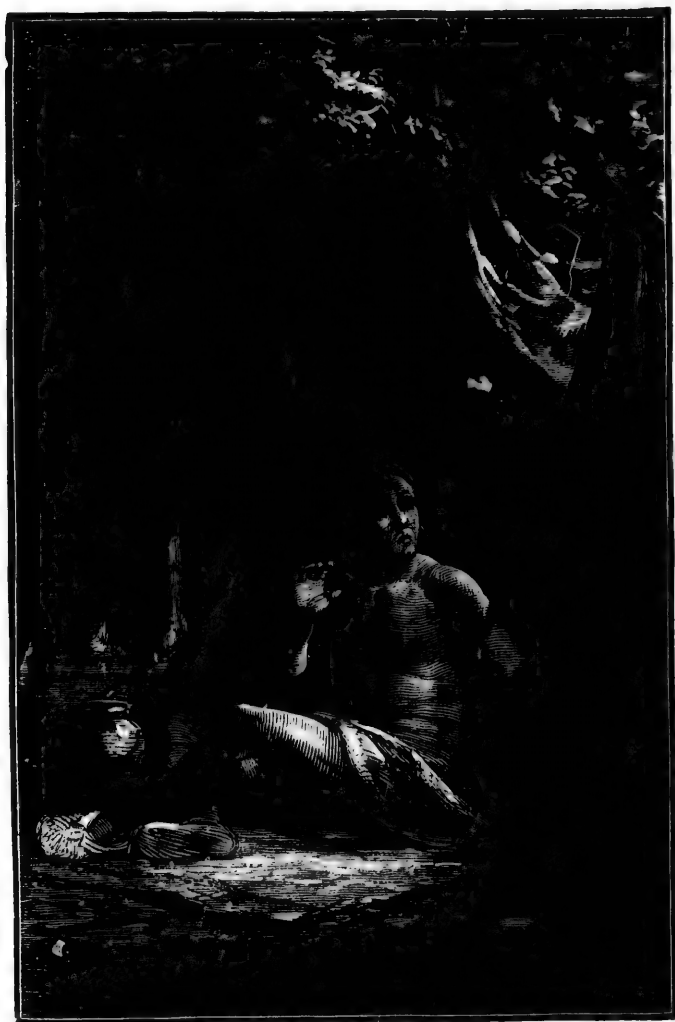
But higher game than squirrels and deer was the far more exciting object of his ambition. From his infancy he had been

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THE "MEDICINE" FAST.

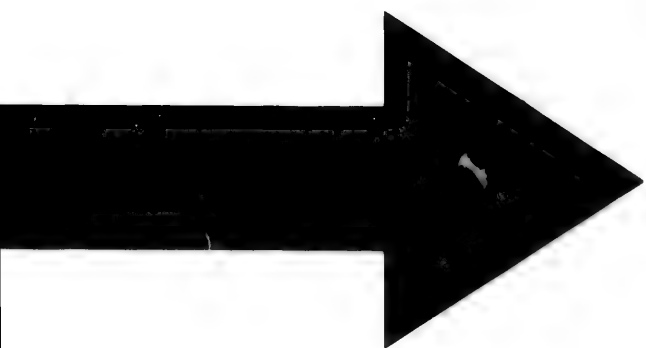
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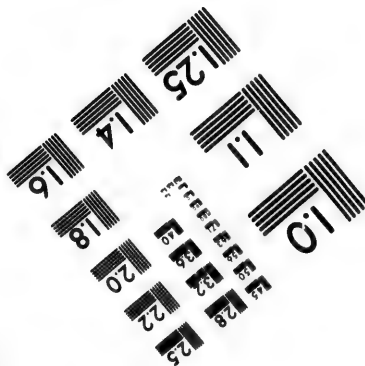
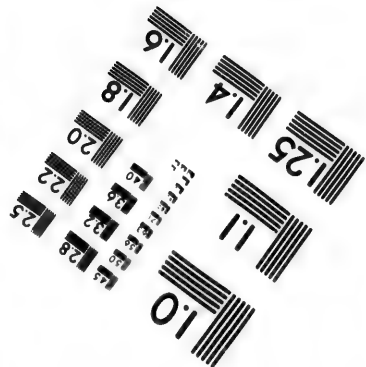
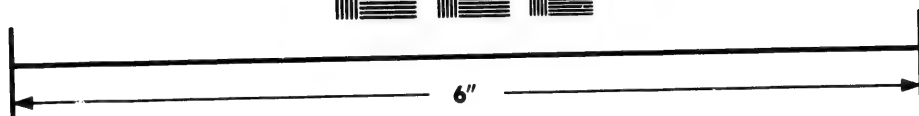
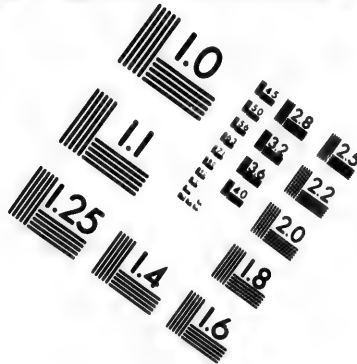
taught to look on martial glory as the one thing to live for, and had drunk in the love of bloodshed with his mother's milk. Scarcely had he fleshed his maiden tomahawk in the chase before he would be lying on a panther's skin in the belief that its fierce heart could be breathed into him during sleep, long-ing for the day when in real earnest he might use the arts of mimic war practised among his playfellows, and standing by with open eyes and ears whenever the braves were boasting of their exploits, or the old men relating the famous annals of the tribe.

On approaching manhood, the Indian youth was called on to pass through an ordeal far more severe than our competitive examinations. Among some tribes we hear of the young men being compelled or volunteering to undergo the most horrible tortures, the very description of which is sickening, but which seem to have been silently and cheerfully borne as a proof of manly fortitude, while a single groan, or even sign of flinching, would have ruined the sufferer's character for life. But one ceremony, of a religious character, was almost indispensable for the red-skinned youth who would put away childish things. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, he blackened his face and retired to a lodge of boughs in some solitary spot, where he would remain days without food, and, as if that were not enough, would sometimes take herbs which produced vomiting, so as to bring his body to the utmost state of exhaustion. The affectionate parents would visit their children from time to time, encouraging them to hold out as long as possible; they were often known thus to pass a week or even ten days without any nourishment but a little water.

The purpose of this strange proceeding was that they might pay particular attention to the dreams or hallucinations of the half delirious state of mind induced by such rigours. These dreams were held of vast importance as indicating the future







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course of the patient's life. Thus, if he dreamed of the sky, he might believe himself to be favoured by the highest powers ; if of an eagle or a wolf, he was destined to distinction as a warrior or hunter ; if of a serpent, the most sacred of animals, he was marked out for a religious career as a medicine man. The animal or thing which seemed to present itself most prominently to his disordered imagination became his special *manitou* or 'medicine,' which he bore always about with him as a potent charm, or at the least, some bone, feather, claw, or other portion of it. He, for instance, whose fancies at the critical period ran upon a bat, would henceforth be devoted to that animal, as a monk is to the peculiar saint of his order. He would wear the skin of a bat attached as a hideous ornament to the crown of his head, or carry its stuffed body in his medicine bag ; and so long as his own rifle shot true, and no foeman's bullet touched him, he would ascribe it to the guardian care of the great bat-spirit. Yet it might also happen that when things went persistently wrong with him, the fickle Indian would roundly abuse his *manitou*, and flinging its symbol wholly out of his affections, take up with some other fetish that might seem likely to bring him better luck.

Before looking into the life of our hero as a married man, it may be mentioned that he was singularly capable of another tender relation. It was common for two young Indians to vow lifelong friendship, uniting themselves by almost sacramental ties which bound them as closely as if they had been brothers in blood. The two would then become inseparable companions in war and the chase, would share one another's goods and fortunes, would be bound to avenge one another's injuries, and each would even be debarred from marrying into the other's family, now regarded as his own. There are some striking instances of devotion between such friends. One of the Jesuit Relations preserves the fame of a red-skinned Pylades and

Orestes, who having been taken prisoner, and one only being condemned to the fire, the other insisted on perishing along with him ; and they were accordingly tortured to death by their admiring captors, after receiving baptism at the hands of the no less admiring missionary.

So, too, the trader Alexander Henry, whose narrative gives us so many hints about Indian life, owed his escape from the massacre of Fort Michillimackinac to his good fortune in having entered into such a bond. A Chippeway named Wawatam had, in his great medicine dream, seen cause to understand that his destiny was to adopt an Englishman as his 'heart's best brother.' Taking a fancy to Henry, he waited upon him, attended by all his family, and made a formal proposal to swear eternal friendship. The Englishman agreed ; the bargain was confirmed by mutual exchange of presents ; and, as things turned out in no long time, one of the parties had reason to congratulate himself on having made such a friend in need. The story of what ensued is too long to tell here ; but it is to be met with in many well-known collections of the kind. We may already seem to be lingering too much among the early days of Indian life and the topics suggested by this branch of the subject.

To take a scalp was, in the education of the forest and the prairie, much the same thing as taking a degree. As soon as he had thus proved himself to be a man, the young warrior might think of a wife ; though, when fortune had not favoured him so far as a successful battle, his skill and diligence in hunting would also recommend him as a good husband. His fancy being 'gently turned to thoughts of love,' he would make a point of rising early to kill as much game as he could, that the damsels might know what a handy master he would make for a wigwam ; while at night, like tom-cats and

romantic heroes in the New World, he would prow! about, expressing his feelings by the doleful tones of an instrument known as the Indian flute. In these days we may be sure also that his finest clothes and ornaments had no want of airing.

The youth and the maiden who had cast eyes of affection on each other, soon found means of comparing their sentiments, and it was not at all improper for the lady to make the first advances. But the match was probably negotiated between the old people; often their respective mothers settled the matter without consulting the parties most concerned, and the young couple might never have spoken to each other till they were introduced as husband and wife. The bride's parents looked for such a considerable present upon the occasion, that they may be spoken of as selling their daughter. And for the first year, during which it was customary for the bridegroom to remain on probation, as it were, in their wigwam, all the proceeds of his hunting went to the wife's family.

The incidents of courtship were sometimes odd enough. Long tells us that a Canadian Indian, on coming to propose to a girl, would pull the object of his affection three times by the nose, before addressing her father in a high-flown strain: 'I love your daughter. Will you give her to me, that the small roots of our hearts may entangle, so that the strongest wind that blows shall never separate them?' John Gyles, while captive among the Indians of Maine, observed that a young fellow, after taking the advice of his relations about a sweetheart, 'goes into the wigwam where she is, and looks on her. If he likes her appearance, he tosses a chip or stick into her lap, which she takes, and, with a reserved side look, views the person who sent it, yet handles the chip with admiration, as though she wonders from whence it came. If

she likes him, she throws the chip to him with a modest smile. . . . But if she dislikes her suitor, she, with a surly countenance, throws the chip aside, and he comes no more there.' The same writer remarks: 'If she has been educated to make *monoodah* (Indian bags), birch dishes, to lace snow shoes, to make Indian shoes, string wampum belts, sew birch canoes, and boil the kettle, she is esteemed a lady of fine accomplishments. If the man sought out for her husband have a gun and ammunition, a canoe, spear, and hatchet, a *monoodah*, a crooked knife, looking-glass and paint, a pipe, tobacco, and knot bowl to toss a kind of dice in, he is accounted a gentleman of a plentiful fortune.'

The marriage ceremony, differing in the various tribes, was generally some slight form, accompanied by a good deal of feasting and dancing. The bond thus easily made proved not always a very tight one. Captain Carver describes a long stick as holding the place of a marriage ring. The bride and the bridegroom took hold of either end, while harangues were pronounced by some elderly friend; then it was broken into pieces, which were distributed among those present. If the couple desired to separate, the witnesses brought these pieces again and threw them into the fire. Divorces were frequent, and polygamy by no means unknown, though checked by the fact that few hunters could afford to keep more than one family. When a woman lost her husband, she was thought to honour his memory by marrying again as soon as possible, especially if his successor was one who could and would revenge his death. Should he have fallen in battle, and the party have brought back some captives, the widow had a right to choose any of them to fill his place; and the spouse so selected must take his choice between death and marriage. In this way it could well happen that she consoled herself with the very man whose hands had made her a widow; yet

she found little difficulty in transferring all her affection to the new consort.

Nathan Blake was taken prisoner in New Hampshire, and carried off to Canada, with the dismallest forebodings. But before he had been long among his captors, a stroke of luck befell him. A chief died, and as Blake was a fine athletic fellow, he was appointed successor not only to the honours and authority of the deceased, but to his wigwam and belongings, including a wife and a ready-made family of fine daughters. For some time he lived perforce in the enjoyments of these blessings, but as soon as he could get to Quebec, begged the French to keep him as their prisoner. His new wife, however, was not to be shaken off so easily. She came to Quebec, demanding that her beloved should be restored to her, and was only persuaded to withdraw her claim when he declared that if he had to go home with her, he would upset the canoe on the way and let her drown. So, by his own choice, he spent the rest of his captivity in a French prison, thus almost realizing the predicament of the felon in the old song, who preferred the gallows to the bride offered him as an alternative :

‘The wife’s the worst—drive on the cart!’

Conjugal love among the Indians was evidently no very deep or refining sentiment ; in such unions, indeed, the name master is generally as appropriate as that of husband. It is well known how the red man spent his time in alternate fits of lordly laziness and violent exertion on the war-path or the hunting-ground, while his patient wife had all the daily drudgery for her share. It was her duty not only to manage the household, but to furnish it with the work of her own hands, to clothe the family, to till the corn, to fetch wood and water, to carry burdens, and always to be ready to wait on

her better half, who, when he came home from such business as he condescended to engage in, expected to have his meals set before him without the trouble of giving orders. When he had satisfied himself, she might sit down to dine with the children and the dogs. But this seemed the natural order of things to the squaw, who was proud to be a willing and useful servant, and despised a woman that could not work hard to make her 'man' comfortable. The man who worked for himself was despised also. When James Smith, strolling down to the corn-field to see what a gang of squaws were about, so far forgot himself as to take a hoe and lend a hand, he was taken to task by the old men, who reminded him that, having been adopted in the place of a great warrior, it would never do for him to hoe corn like a woman. And as Smith confesses that he was not naturally over fond of work, 'they never had occasion to reprove me for anything like this again.'

The respect in which woman was held and her influence for good might be small enough, but her power for evil was no less than in other communities. The old story of Helen of Troy was often enacted in the New World. A wife would prove unfaithful; the husband would take bloody and hasty revenge; the relations of the slain might retaliate; the other families would side with this or that party; the debt of blood on either hand would be fearfully multiplied; the tribe would at last be split into two factions, which would become separate nations of implacable enemies, and a long war would rage between them, in which the souls of many a tawny Achilles and Agamemnon would be sent to Hades before their time, till perhaps the once powerful tribe had worn itself out by mutual injuries and continual losses, and each party in turn fell a prey to stronger neighbours—all because a foolish woman seemed fair in the eyes of more than one man!

While politeness towards the fair sex was certainly not an Indian strong point, they cannot be accused of want of respect for the aged. This virtue is apt to be a prominent one among illiterate people, where wisdom is a matter of practical experience, and the theories of clever youngsters are of little value. So Chateaubriand saw an Iroquois boy refuse obedience to his father, but be at once on his good behaviour when the grandfather's authority was appealed to. The title of senators might be taken literally in an Indian tribe, whose nobles and legislators, as a rule, sat in its councils by right of their grey hair. Their highest terms of honour were those which implied difference of age. If one tribe agreed to recognise the pre-eminence of another, it did homage with the names of 'grandfather' and 'uncle.' When they admitted the power of the King of England or the President of the United States, they knew of no loftier title with which to address him than that of their 'great father.' Nor is this trait of character contradicted by the fact that some tribes were known to put an end to the lives of their aged and infirm people. Such a fate was inflicted in no cruel spirit by those to whom life seemed not worth having when the forces which could sustain it were gone.

Another respect in which the Indian showed himself a man of feeling, was the tender sentiment with which he regarded death. Not for himself was any sign of weakness indulged. Like the old Roman, he gloried in facing the King of Terrors with composed dignity; and when he found his last hour upon him, would sing as in a triumph his death-song, would preside at his death-feast, would calmly survey the preparations for his funeral, and would summon his failing strength to console the afflicted family, taking leave of them like the Roman Regulus, not otherwise than if he were ending a trifling business and setting out for some neighbouring village.

Suicide was not rare in Indian life. But the loss of his friends and relations affected him as no torture could, and his care for their senseless bodies may well seem excessive in the case of one who had so little tenderness for his own. Like the Romans, too, he held in horror the very name of death, preferring to express it by circumlocutions, nor for a long time could he bear to pronounce or to hear pronounced the dear names of his dead ones. The time of mourning not only for relations but for friends was often protracted to an extraordinary length; a warrior has been known to forswear for twenty-five years the use of vermilion, the most prized of Indian adornments, out of sorrow for the loss of a comrade. Abstinence from tobacco was another most real sign of woe.

When, or even before, the breath was out of the poor body, it was laid out with pious care, washed, anointed, painted as in life, and dressed as for a festival in its best clothes; while the wigwam was filled with the din of mourners wailing in melancholy cadence, and raising a clash and clatter with sticks in the strange design of driving away the departed spirit and aiding it to escape quickly from its mortal prison. There was no pompous hypocrisy in this genuine outburst of grief. The surviving relatives stained their faces black, wore their oldest garments, went barefoot, fasted, covered their heads, cut their hair, and sometimes even scarified their flesh and maimed themselves of a finger. When the companions of the deceased came to take their last leave of him, they brought such presents as were believed to be still grateful to his soul. Nothing was grudged at such a time. The survivors would themselves go naked in all the rigour of winter, so that their dead might be warmly and richly arrayed on the last journey. When the Pilgrim fathers landed on Cape Cod, Miles Standish and his men found in an Indian grave a knife, a packing needle, and two or three other pieces

of iron, which must have been worth among that tribe ten times their weight in gold. The relations, who contributed most, reserved none of these offerings for themselves. They were either buried in the tomb, or hung up above it as a monument, or distributed at the funeral, often by way of prizes at games held in honour of the deceased.

With sorrowful farewells and addresses to him who could no more answer, the corpse was laid in its grave, swathed in costliest furs, if these were to be had, and loaded with savage ornaments. By its side were placed the instruments used in life: the gun and knife of the dead man, his paint and mirror, his platter and bark cup, with some little store of provisions;¹ flint and steel and wood to make a fire; snow shoes if the season were winter, and a change of moccasins for the rough road. Even his pipe and tobacco were not forgotten, for, without these things, how ill would he fare on his lonely way to the spirit land! So the woman was provided with her familiar implements: the paddle, the kettle, the carrying strap, with which her lot was still to be patient labour. When the tribe came to possess horses, the steed of a chief would often be buried beside its master, lest his spirit should have to trudge on foot. Such is the Indian's dim notion of a future state, in which,

'Admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.'

The journey to the spirit land was believed to take ten—or, according to other accounts, four—days. Therefore, for so many nights was a fire lighted on the grave, to warm the poor wandering ghost; and after these days had passed, the bereaved friends held a joyful feast, to celebrate its arrival in the happy hunting-grounds, where all would henceforth be

¹ 'For fear he should die again,' says the Jesuit Father Roubaud, unable to forbear a little stroke of satire.

well with it. So, at least, was their faith, but still the troubled heart found it often hard to conceive of the dear life as resting in peace and comfort in these unfamiliar scenes.

When Carver was residing with an Indian tribe, a couple lost a son about four years of age. They gave themselves up to such outbursts of grief that the father died also; whereupon the woman dried her tears, and appeared cheerful and resigned. Not unnaturally astonished, the traveller sought to know the reason of this extraordinary change; and the mother told him that, as her child was so young, she had feared it might not be able to support itself in the land of spirits; but now that its father had gone after it,—who was such a good hunter,—she was quite at ease as to its welfare, and had nothing to wish for but the day when she might join them.

Many tribes, especially of the prairies and of the south, exposed their dead on scaffolds, till the sun and rain had bleached them to skeletons. Such scaffolds also were frequently temporary places of deposit, if deep snow or distance from home hindered the body being laid among its fathers. On the rivers of the west coast canoes were used as coffins, in which the corpses were placed on some island or high rock, out of the reach of wild beasts. Caves were sometimes turned into charnel vaults, as Alexander Henry found to his horror, when, after taking refuge in one for the night, the morning showed him that he had been sleeping on a pile of human bones and skulls. In many parts of America are still to be seen the vast mounds which were anciently raised as sepulchres. But the Indians of our backwoods commonly buried their dead in the earth, lying east and west, and sometimes propped up in a sitting posture. The graves were lined with bark or branches; the ground about was carefully cleared of weeds and rubbish; and above was set up a

covering of bark to shelter the spot from the weather, a fence round it against the wolves and panthers, and a post, hieroglyphically painted with the totem of the deceased reversed, as a monument.

The wandering Indian might find his lonely tomb at the foot of some mighty trunk ; but the settled villages had their cemeteries hard by, which were tended and guarded as reverently as our own. Here, long after their loss, the bereaved were wont to come, bringing food and presents for the soul of their dear one, singing plaintive dirges, speaking words of love and sadness into the silent air, and taking mournful comfort from these vain services of affection. The wife might be seen sleeping above the remains of her husband, and the mother pouring milk from her breast upon the sod beneath which she had laid her child. So strong was this delusion of some shadow of life remaining within or about the grave, that after a few months they would even open it, and put new clothes on the body if the old ones seemed decaying.

Yet it need not be supposed that such true mourners were wholly buried in gloom. Like children, they passed readily from tears to laughter, and these pious rites were done in Sabbath hours easily spared from the round of common life. Even after they had formed new relations, amid their labours and pleasures they clung to the memory of the departed, and would continue family feasts in their honour, sitting in darkness and silence, or lighting a fire upon the grave, and giving to the flames the poor hovering soul's share of the provisions. Their enemies, indeed, have some reason in accusing the Indians of a morbid love of lamentation ; and their best friends can scarcely admire them, as they are frequently found, begging rum to excite themselves to maudlin tears over the irrevocable past.

Such sentiments hallowed the burying-ground of a tribe as

effectually as if they had been ten times consecrated with bell, book, and candle. It was accounted the highest profanity to disturb the abodes of the dead: an enemy who proceeded to this extremity, by the very act declared unquenchable war; and to the heartless irreverence of the whites in this respect, they owed much of the hatred that wrought so many a bloody deed.

The coming of the white men did much to destroy or modify these funeral customs. But among the undegenerate tribes the care of their fathers' bones lasted for years, and even for generations. The Indian dead had usually two funerals, a particular and a general one. At the end of certain periods, or as often as the community moved its town to a new site, a most sacred ceremony was held, to which the allies of the tribe were invited, and more rarely strangers, who, like the Jesuit Brebeuf, might well be amazed at what they saw. The corpses which might have lain in peace beneath the snows of ten winters, were dug up and gathered together, to be conveyed to one large pit made for their reception near the new settlement. In this common grave they were reverently placed, the same tears, orations, gifts, and rich attire being lavished on the mouldering forms as when they had first been carried to their rest. Each skeleton was recognised and cared for by the members of the family, who bore upon their shoulders each the remnants of his own to this last home. But the mourning was general, and the rites lasted for many days. This feast of the dead, indeed, seems to have been the greatest solemnity of savage life, as the yearly feast of the new corn was their chief time of rejoicing.¹

¹ In the old Huron country, near Lake Simcoe, such graves have been discovered containing more than a thousand skeletons mixed with weapons, kettles, beads, etc.

CHAPTER III.

INDIAN WARFARE.



WAR was, to the Indian mind, the chief end of man. The red-skinned youth looked eagerly forward to the hour when he should prove his manhood by risking his life, and, till he had taken a scalp, felt himself unworthy of the love of a squaw. All the traditions and institutions of the tribe helped to keep alive the thirst for bloodshed and military glory. So it was well for the white settlements that the want of harmony between the Indian tribes and of dis-

cipline among themselves, seldom allowed them to carry on sustained operations with a strong force. All through the long struggle, they were powerful to annoy but not to crush the race which could meet their desultory attacks by organized and persevering resistance.

Excuses for war were, unhappily, seldom wanting to the tribes, who generally lived with their neighbours in a state of ever-renewed grudges and chronic hostility. Considerations of policy, long and gravely discussed by the council of elders, the passions of revenge or covetousness, mere restlessness or whim, the ambition of chiefs or the bravado of hot-headed youths, might be the cause of taking up the hatchet. Any number of men might volunteer to go on the war-path; shame was the only compulsion used. Any warrior who could get men to follow him, was thereby commissioned to lead them to the attack. His fame and character were the sole hold he had upon their allegiance. Success would be the sufficient warrant of his ambition; but the penalties of failure were such as not to encourage empty conceit.

When such a man had resolved to go upon the war-path, the whole tribe gave itself up to excitement, during which many who had not intended to enlist would be so carried away as to rush forward and take up the hatchet with the rest. The chief, after having prepared his mind by days of solitary fasting and prayer, made his body fearful with war-paint, and held a feast of dogs' flesh for all who volunteered to join him in the expedition. The warriors also fasted, bathed, anointed, and took strong medicines, as if purifying their bodies for some religious rite. The sorcerers of the tribe frantically contorted themselves and raised a discordant tumult of drumming and yelling as they consulted their auguries, prepared their charms, and offered their incantations for success. Then comes the scene so graphically described by the pen of Parkman:—

'Night has now closed in, and the rough clearing is illuminated by the blaze of fires and burning pine knots, casting their deep red glare upon the dusky boughs of the tall surrounding pine trees, and upon the wild multitude who,

fluttering with feathers and bedaubed with paint, have gathered for the celebration of the war-dance. A painted post is driven into the ground, and the crowd form a wide circle around it. The chief leaps into the vacant space, brandishing his hatchet as if rushing upon an enemy, and in a loud vehement tone chants his own exploits and those of his ancestors, enacting the deeds which he describes, yelling the war-whoop, throwing himself into all the postures of actual fight, striking the post as if it were an enemy, and tearing the scalp from the head of the imaginary victim. Warrior after warrior follows his example, until the whole assembly, as if fired with sudden frenzy, rush together into the ring, leaping, stamping, and whooping, brandishing knives and hatchets in the firelight, hacking and stabbing the air, and working themselves into the fury of battle, while at intervals they all break forth into a burst of ferocious yells which sounds for miles away over the lonely midnight forest.'

In the morning the warriors set out in single file, their chief at the head singing his war-song, and the whole party firing their guns, shouting and whooping along the line as they entered the woods. The old men, women, and children generally accompanied them to their first halting-place, and carried back such part of their finery as was not suitable for active service. Here a tender and sorrowful farewell was taken, and the Indian brave need not be ashamed to embrace his friends as one who might never see them more. Then, unencumbered and with small or no supplies of food, they marched towards the point marked for attack, or, launching their canoes, paddled forth upon their deadly errand.

These war parties were often accompanied by lads at a very early age, who acted as servants, gathering wood and attending to the cookery at their nightly encampments. Joseph Brant is stated to have been in battle when only thirteen, and to have

honestly confessed in later years that as soon as the firing began, he was for a few minutes so frightened that he had to take hold of a sapling to steady himself. But he soon recovered his self-command, and did his part in the day's work, living to be able to say, 'I like the harpsichord well and the organ still better, but I like the drum and trumpet best of all, for they make my heart beat quick.'

Such was the education of an Indian, that any marked display of cowardice was rare even among these callow soldiers. If so shameful a thing did happen, it might meet with as prompt and severe punishment as in a case about to be mentioned from the memoirs of J. D. Hunter. Yet the Indians have also been noticed to follow the wise policy of overlooking any appearance of trepidation on the part of an untried warrior, trusting that thus he might be better encouraged to overcome his weakness. A second or third failing would scarcely be dealt with so considerably. The culprit, if let off at the cheapest, would be forced to wear a petticoat and allow his hair to grow, like one of the squaws, among whom, as with the rest of the tribe, he henceforth passed for an object of the utmost scorn, unless he could find and take some chance of redressing his character.

The tribe with whom young Hunter was living 'had returned from a successful war excursion, in which one of their party, who had on a former occasion been culpable, behaved in a very cowardly manner. The whole nation, except those who had lost relations, and Te-pa-gee, the subject for chastisement, was engaged in rejoicings appropriate to the occasion of victory. Te-pa-gee, probably without the least suspicion of the destiny that awaited him, had withdrawn from the public ceremonials, and sullenly seated himself on the trunk of a tree adjacent to the river. Shortly after, and apparently without design, the squaws and children, in their dances, approached the river, near the place occupied by him, when E-gron-ga-see walked

carelessly through the festive groups, presented himself before the astonished culprit, and proclaimed to him in a voice audible to all present, "Thy cowardice has forfeited thy life."

'The sports instantly ceased ; all was silence and consternation ; E-gron-ga-see drew his knife from beneath his robe ; Ta-pa-gée bared his bosom, received a thrust to the heart, and died without scarcely uttering a groan. The warriors then assembled with the witnesses of this tragic scene ; the executioner, addressing his audience in a few words, stated the reprehensible conduct of the deceased, and the necessity that existed for inflicting so signal a punishment, after which all returned to their respective homes.

'I need not attempt to describe the feelings which this event occasioned in my mind, and those of the young Indians generally. We all concluded that, in preference to suffering such ignominy, we would die a thousand deaths, if it were possible, in defence of our country ; and the old men and squaws availed themselves of the occurrence to confirm and strengthen our resolutions.'

Before allowing young men to go on the war-path, their resolution was sometimes put to the test in a very singular fashion. During the ceremonies of the war-dance, the would-be recruits were brought forward, and the veterans exhausted their ingenuity in mocking and abusing them, showering insults and blows upon them, torturing them with burning coals, and inflicting other outrages, which it was a proof of high spirit to bear without complaint. If any of the aspirants showed the slightest sign of nervousness or impatience, he was set aside as unworthy to be a warrior.

A war party in the backwoods was no mere crowd of tumultuous savages. They had certain notions of military order. The chiefs planned and directed till they came into action ;

'then each man is to fight as though he was to gain the battle himself,' says Colonel James Smith, who fought both with them and against them. They could close into a circle or a semi-circle, the latter a favourite formation in awaiting the enemy, and could sweep the woods as with a net, each warrior keeping a fixed interval from the next. Signals were passed along the line by preconcerted imitations of the voices of beasts and birds, in which they had been practised from childhood—the bark of the fox, the howl of the wolf, the cry of the hawk, the gobble of the turkey. Such signals came into use as they approached the enemy, when the utmost precaution was observed, and the advancing warriors might forbear to discharge a gun or light a fire, lurking all day in the woods, and creeping forward by night, preferring every discomfort of cold and hunger to the mere chance of giving any alarm.

Means also of communicating with their allies or with detached parties were always at hand. A piece of birch bark placed in a forked stick, would give a remarkably correct map of the country, the trails, the course of the rivers, and so forth, drawn for whom-ever it might concern. On the stripped trunks of trees, with charcoal and red paint, they would leave a pictorial record of what had happened, which to their friends was as intelligible as a written despatch, and might also answer the purpose of discouraging or misinforming their enemies. And they had a way of counting their numbers by bundles of small sticks, one of which stood for each warrior who had joined the party.

Baron La Hontan has given us an interpretation of one of these hieroglyphic drawings. It was divided into several compartments. In the first was a tomahawk and the *fleur-de-lis*, the emblem of France, meaning that the French had gone to war with one hundred and eighty soldiers, represented by eighteen marks, each standing for ten men. In the second, a bird taking flight from a mountain (the emblem of Montreal)

showed that the soldiers had set out from that place, and in the deer-month (July), as was indicated by a crescent on the back of a deer. Then the picture of a canoe showed them travelling by water, and a foot marked out their march by land, the number of days being reckoned by figures of cabins, meant for camping-places. A long cabin stood for a Seneca village, with the sun at the right hand of it, to show that what now happened took place to the east of the place. Twelve marks, beside the emblem of the Senecas, counted for one hundred and twenty of that tribe; fractions of ten would have been represented by smaller marks. That they were taken by surprise was explained by the figure of a man lying asleep; a war-club and eleven heads showed that so many had been killed; while five figures, with another peculiar mark, meant that fifty had been taken prisoners. In another division, similar marks within a bow declared that nine of the French had been killed and twelve wounded. A number of arrows flying both ways told of a hard fight either side; then a cloud of arrows all going in one direction ended the story by making clear that the beaten party had run away.

Before setting out to war, the assailants might have the grace to announce their intentions, and this was done by sending into the territory to be invaded a war-club or arrows painted red, and marked in such a way as to explain from whom they came, sometimes even the cause for which war was declared. The Indian heralds glided by night to the enemy's village, and hurled these signs of hostility into some cabin, or left them sticking in the ground or in the cloven head of some murdered victim, where they would soon be found and their meaning too well interpreted. Then the threatened tribe prepared either to fight or fly, as their strength counselled them to deal with the challenge thus conveyed.

We have all heard what privations and fatigue the Indians

would willingly undergo when they had slaughter in view. It would seem as if, on the march, they attached importance to a certain religious mortification of the flesh. There was an extraordinary etiquette which restrained them from eating and drinking except in certain appointed ways, from encamping unless in certain positions, from sitting on the bare ground, leaning against a tree, halting or lying down without turning the face homewards; and the young warrior, while serving his apprenticeship, was subject to special restrictions. Such rules were perhaps not always in force, but we find them alluded to by narrators who, in different parts of the country, were the comrades of Indian war parties, and who also mention the strange, superstitious ceremonies by which they thought to ascertain the proceedings of the enemy, and to augur as to the probabilities of success. Dreams were considered as of particular value in this respect, and the hoot of a chance owl would be taken for a most sinister presentiment of evil.

Strict as he might be in observing the customs of the war-path, the Indian brave held himself bound to no other kind of obedience. Unpropitious omens, or bad dreams, or distrust of the leader, were his excuse for throwing up the enterprise at any point, and making the best of his way home. When the spirit of desertion once broke out, it was likely to be contagious. John Tanner describes a war party of sixty men dwindling down to five, the unfortunate chief being able to do nothing but sit on the ground and weep; and when an Indian was moved to tears, his heart must have indeed been full of shame and bitterness! Setting sentinels round the camp only increased the mischief; any attempt at restraint was but a challenge to the uncontrollable spirits of the Indian youth.

It will thus be seen how difficult it was for the Indians to keep together a large force for any length of time. But their favourite and most formidable system of tactics required no

large force. Aiming at a surprise, and not calculating on any considerable body being gathered together from the scattered settlements to encounter them, they would divide into small scalping-parties, and spread themselves over the enemy's country to do whatever injury they could find opportunity for. Two or three men would venture thus hundreds of miles from their tribe; twenty or thirty made an effective army. For weeks they would lie lurking in the woods; for days they would go without food or sleep, awaiting their chance of taking the foe at disadvantage and unprepared. At last the moment of action would come. If time allowed, they had renewed their war-paint and anointed themselves as for a festival, but they preferred to go into battle fasting. The leader gave the signal; the warriors flung down their packs, stripped off their upper garments, and, almost naked, rushed to the onset shouting out the war-whoop, the sound of which was so terrible that Tanner declares he has seen a buffalo so frightened by it as to sink on the ground, and a bear to let go his hold and fall from a tree in utter helplessness. It was like the whistle of some maddened steam-engine, a long-drawn, piercing screech, modulated by the fingers placed as stops over the mouth. Woe to the solitary woodman or the unprotected family upon whose ears that inhuman cry burst as the knell of despair!

Then followed the horrors of an Indian battle-field, so often described. In the older days, the victors would wreak their fury on the bodies of the dead by the barbarous mutilations and dismemberments represented with such sickening fidelity in the illustrations to De Bry's voyages. For want of better weapons, the whole head would be hacked off by stone hatchets, and exhibited as a token of success. But the tribes with whom the backwoodsmen of last century had to do, contented themselves with taking the scalp of the slain enemy; and, as we all know, it was a point of honour with every shaved and

shorn warrior to leave one long tuft for the convenience of his conqueror, who, setting his foot on the neck of the fallen, taking firm hold of the scalp-lock, and making a rapid and dexterous sweep with his knife, raised a triumphant yell as he held the bleeding trophy aloft, and felt the pride of manhood running to its highest tide in his veins. The North American Indians have been accused of being cannibals on occasion. This charge, however, appears to have been, in later times at least, only so far true, that in the fury of war or torture, they sometimes devoured the flesh of their enemies, and when they had killed a remarkably brave warrior, would perhaps eat his heart, or other portion of the body, in the belief that this would communicate to them some share of his excellence.

When two hostile parties of Indians met openly face to face, they were as apt as the heroes of Homer and Virgil to waste a good deal of time and breath in defying and provoking each other before coming to blows. The chief warriors would probably be well known by sight to their opponents, so that offensive personalities came into play. Indeed, though they could be silent as the grave when need were, they took every safe opportunity of venting their feelings by noise; and on falling in with any of their allies, such a tumult of shouting and firing would be raised on each side, that a stranger might have thought them about to proceed to a real battle. In Champlain's narrative of the expedition which he took with an Algonquin band against the redoubtable Iroquois, he describes the two armies, after a formal challenge, spending all the night within ear-shot of each other, dancing, singing, and interchanging boasts and insults, till morning found them brimful of martial ardour, and leaping, writhing, crouching, glaring, and howling, they rushed into collision through the woods. But now, for the first time, these glades re-echoed with the deadly sound of the arquebuss, and when the hitherto

invincible Iroquois saw their chiefs fall before the mysterious flash, they fled headlong, and knew that a mightier power than theirs had penetrated the thick forests of which they were no longer undisputed lords.

The introduction of steel and firearms, of course, modified the features of Indian fighting, and in the tribes that had most intercourse with white men, soon caused bows and arrows to be given up to boys, and war-clubs to be carried more for ornament than use. Useless, also, became such rude armour as they had been wont to bear, bucklers of hide and corslets of woven twigs. But the spirit of their warfare remained the same, and had, perforce, to be caught, in some measure, by their white adversaries. That it had nothing of the refinement of chivalry was shown by the fact that the name and duties of a spy were always honourable in the wars of the woods. The greatest general among them was the cunningest master of ambush and decoy. Their notions of meritorious courage were not ours. When surrounded or brought to bay, they would defend themselves to the last; and if a desperate dash seemed necessary, men might be found to vow that they would 'throw away their bodies'—that is, lead a forlorn hope; but most Indian warriors counted it mere folly not to run away, when that was their best chance of living to fight another day.

The object of a war party was, they held, to kill as many of the enemy as possible, with as little loss to themselves; and they were easily discouraged by having what our troops would consider a small proportion of their men *hors de combat*. An Indian force has been known to retreat from a battle in which they had lost only one-third as many as their enemy. Great exertions were always made to carry off their dead and wounded. To lose his own men was as great a discredit to a chief as it was honour to kill those of the other party. So

every advantage of stealthiness and deceit was taken, and the backwoods' brave seldom chose to fight unless where he could slink behind trees, or avail himself of some other cover in the intervals between each furious rush.

A regiment of Highlanders once managed to elude the vigilance of the Indian scouts who were swarming in the woods, and by night occupied a hill close to the enemy's position. So far, so good; but, like British soldiers, what must they needs do but proclaim their advantage with strains of elation and triumph! At daylight they began to beat their drums and blow their bagpipes, thereby giving a most useful warning to the Indians, who till then knew nothing of their whereabouts, but who did not fail to profit by the information offered them. They flew to arms, scattered themselves in the woods, and surrounded the poor Highlanders, who in their close ranks found themselves a target for bullets from behind every tree, so that they were defeated with terrible loss. The victors were amazed at their folly in standing crowing like conceited roosters on their dunghill, when they might have quietly fallen on the enemy asleep; and a warrior, commenting on this blunder, could only explain it by supposing that the white chief had been drunk.

Strange to say, the men who so excelled as scouts did not distinguish themselves as sentinels. With all the cunning and strategy employed in Indian fighting, it seems that they usually neglected the simple precaution of keeping a good guard. Night attacks were common; a single daring warrior would sometimes crawl into a camp of the foe, blow up the embers on their fire, and by this light take two or three scalps before bounding off with a triumphant yell. Among the exploits which have been handed down of a great Huron champion named Piscaret, he is said to have stolen into an Iroquois town, and hidden himself in a wood pile, from

whence he issued out on two successive nights to murder a whole family ; and on the third, though many of the inhabitants were on the watch, he brained a sleeping sentinel and fled in the confusion. Yet, in spite of many experiences of this sort, the Indians are seldom found setting a single sentry when they lay down to rest.

Sometimes, indeed, they turned this very custom of carelessness to good account. A party that had reason to expect an attack might fill their blankets with leaves and rotten wood, arranging these dummies in the posture of sleeping men round the flickering fire ; then the wakeful warriors fell back among the trees, and for this once did not fail to watch with the eyes of the lynx. In due time, perhaps just before daylight, the favourite hour for a surprise, up came the assailants, treading like cats, and thirsting for blood like tigers. Seeing the prostrate forms in the dim light, they made sure of the longed-for scalps. A whispered consultation, a steady aim, a sudden volley, and they rush forward, whooping, to finish their bloody work with the cold steel. But while their guns are still empty, the red flashes and the quick reports break out anew from the darkness of the thicket ; ere they can fly from the trap into which they have thrown themselves, the concealed enemy bursts forth upon them, and the would-be biters find themselves most fatally bit.

Soldiers accustomed only to the methods of civilised war were not the best for dealing with such enemies, as was disastrously proved in more than one case,—notably on ‘Braddock’s Field,’ famous in history and fiction (in Thackeray’s *Virginians*, for instance, and in our old friend, *Sandford and Merton*). General Braddock set out through the woods, with 1200 men, to take the French Fort du Quesne, now Pittsburgh. His force was partly composed of regular troops

and partly of Virginian militia, whose officers knew the country and the enemy that they might have to encounter. But instead of listening to their advice, he insisted on conducting his army as if he were on such a campaign as he had had experience of, despising the provincials for their deficiencies in the way of pipeclay and parade almost as much as he despised the French Indians, whom he expected to find flying in terror before his well-ordered ranks. He little thought what was to be the result of his folly. The Indians had spies watching every step of his march; and four hundred of them, with a handful of French soldiers, lay in ambush for him a few miles from the fort.

The little army with its gay uniforms and glistening bayonets was marching confidently along; only a few hours, they fancied, lay between them and their prize. Suddenly, as they were moving up a wooded hillside, a heavy fire was opened on them from front and flank by an unseen enemy. The advanced parties fell back, and the troops were at once thrown into disorder. They attempted to return the fire, but shot down their own friends rather than the foe, who still continued to take deadly aim from the cover of the woods and ravines. Many of the officers who had been in the battle all the time could not be sure that they had seen a single man of the force they were fighting with. General Braddock behaved with greater courage than wisdom. Hastening into the thick of the confusion, he tried to form his men into columns and platoons, only to make them better targets for the Indian rifles. The militiamen disobeying his orders, took to trees and fought each man for himself. If this example had been imitated by all, the small force of Indians might have been driven back by their own tactics; but the infatuated commander's notions of discipline were his ruin. For two or three hours the troops remained exposed to this murderous fire, by which their

officers were specially singled out; then all courage and subordination were lost, and at last there was nothing for it but flight for those who could yet fly from the lurking conquerors.

'Our men,' says Thackeray's hero, 'halted, huddled up together, in spite of the shouts and orders of the general and officers to advance, and fired wildly into the brushwood, of course making no impression. Those in advance came running back on the main body, frightened, and many of them wounded. They reported there were five thousand Frenchmen and a legion of yelling Indian devils in front, who were scalping our people as they fell. We could hear their cries from the wood around as our men dropped under their rifles. There was no inducing the people to go forward now. One aide-de-camp after another was sent forward and never returned.'

Braddock himself was mortally wounded—shot down, it is said, by one of his own men, furious at the ignorant obstinacy with which he had led them into such a situation. A greater man than he—George Washington—escaped unhurt, though he had two horses shot under him and four bullets through his coat. He acted as one of the general's aides-de-camp, and if all had shown as much courage and good sense, far other must have been the fortune of the day. More than half of the soldiers and most of the officers were killed and wounded. The Indians, in their fury, gave quarter to few, which was nothing but mercy, as the unhappy prisoners were afterwards tortured to death under the walls of the fort.

Martinet officers and well-drilled soldiers being thus found wanting, we had to condescend to take lessons from the Indians in their own ways of fighting. After some practice in their wars, the white man came to be more than a match for the red man; and though several signal defeats had yet to be undergone, discipline, prudence, and experience were able in the long run to put an end to the troubles of the frontier.

CHAPTER IV.

INDIANS AT A SIEGE.



WE have seen that sieges were a common feature of this forest fighting. The Indians themselves made use of fortifications, if it were but a stockade round their villages, or a rude enclosure of stakes about a temporary encampment in a dangerous neighbourhood. The 'castles' of the Iroquois were more elaborately fortified, being surrounded by a triple row of trunks, set aslant across each other, and having a gallery or rampart within, furnished with ladders, heaps of stones to hurl down upon the assailants, and gutters of water in case it

should be attempted to apply fire, which, against these wooden walls, played much the same part as artillery against more artificial ramparts. But a very little engineering was enough to baffle the red men, so long as they were not allowed to bring into action their own arts of treachery and surprise. Where earthworks or stone walls were in question, they were,

of course, quite at a loss. So they could do little against our fortified places, when vigilantly defended, unless acting in conjunction with regular troops ; and though to such an army they were able, in the backwoods, to give most effectual aid, their defiance of discipline and wayward ferocity often rendered them most troublesome and compromising allies. A sad illustration of this was the massacre at Fort William Henry, which made some noise at the time, and is now, perhaps, best known from the description of it in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

In the last French war of the colonies, when for the moment the enemy seemed to be getting the best of it (though in a few years the English flag was to float over the heights of Quebec), M. de Montcalm prepared against Fort William Henry, upon Lake George, an expedition of 6000 troops, and about 2000 Indians from various tribes, most of whom were more or less faithful allies of the French king, not so much from love of him as from hatred to the English and their Iroquois allies. Many of them were also Christians after a very superficial fashion, and these were accompanied to the field by their devoted priests, who knew well how little such converts were to be trusted out of their sight. And, indeed, it was often more than either officers or pastors could do to keep them to some sense of order and humanity. The reverent fathers could not turn their backs for a moment but their unruly disciples would be running into mischief, and throwing religious lessons to the wind at the bidding of savage instincts. Now they would be getting madly drunk ; then they would be found torturing, or even eating, their prisoners, heedless of the disgust of the Frenchmen. At one time a party of them amused themselves with firing off their guns round the boats conveying the powder magazines, and would not desist for the orders, or rather the entreaties, of the guard, till their Jesuit

priest, roused from his weary couch, was fetched, whereupon they all ran away like so many naughty schoolboys at the sight of their master. Again, when it was of the utmost importance to transport the artillery through the rocky woods, the Indians, tired of salt meat, had killed and cooked all the beasts of burden. The Jesuit, who gives us this account of his hard task, tried to encourage himself by noticing that when there was no devilry doing among them, they were willing enough to chant and confess ; but for a little even his patience gave way, and he declined to profane the rites of his church by celebrating them among such barbarians.

Here is an example of the troubles of shepherding a flock of this kind.¹ Five English prisoners were being brought to shore in a boat, and the 'sight of these unhappy captives spread joy and satisfaction through the hearts of those who were present ; but it was, for the most part, a ferocious and barbarous joy, which showed itself by fearful cries and by steps which were sad for humanity. A thousand Indians, drawn from the thirty-six nations who were united under the French standard, were present and lined the bank. In an instant, without any apparent concert between them, we saw them rush with the greatest precipitation into the neighbouring woods. I did not know what could be the object of a retreat so hasty and unexpected, but it was almost immediately shown, for a moment afterwards I saw them return with every mark of fury, armed with clubs with which they had prepared to give these unfortunate English a most cruel reception. I could not restrain my feelings at the sight of these cruel preparations. Tears streamed from my eyes, but my grief was nevertheless not inactive. I advanced without hesitation to encounter these savage brutes, in the hope of softening them ; but, alas !

¹ Father Roubaud's narrative of Montcalm's expedition, translated in Kip's *Jesuits in North America*.

what chance had my feeble voice of being even heard amidst the tumult, and the sounds which did reach them were rendered unintelligible by the difference of language, and much more by the ferocity of their hearts. However, I did not spare the most bitter reproaches towards certain of the Abenakis whom I met in my way, and the earnest air which animated my words inclined them to sentiments of humanity. Confused and ashamed, they separated themselves from the murderous troop, casting away the cruel instruments they had prepared to use. But what effect could this produce, when it was the withdrawal of a few arms from nearly two thousand, which were determined to strike without pity? Seeing how useless were the attempts I made, I resolved to withdraw, that I might not be a witness of the bloody tragedy which was about to take place. I had taken some steps when a feeling of compassion recalled me to the bank, from whence I could see those unhappy victims whom they were preparing for the sacrifice. Their condition renewed all my sensibility. The terror with which they had been seized had scarcely left them strength to hold themselves up; their countenances, cast down and marked by consternation, displayed the true image of death. It was indeed a question of life or death, for they were about to expire under a shower of blows, unless their preservation came from the heart of barbarism itself, and their sentence should be revoked by the same persons who seemed to have been the first to pronounce it.

‘The French officer who commanded in the boat had seen the movements which were taking place on the bank; touched by the commiseration so natural in an honourable man at the sight of unhappiness, he endeavoured to awaken the same feelings in the hearts of Outaouacs, who were masters of the prisoners. So adroitly did he manage the matter, that he at last produced some sensibility in their minds, and interested

them in favour of these miserable beings. They indeed entered into his scheme with a zeal which must have ensured its success. No sooner was the boat near enough to the bank for the voice to be heard, than one of the Outaouacs, speaking boldly, cried in a menacing tone, "These prisoners are mine; I claim that you shall respect me by respecting what belongs to me. Let there be an end to all ill-treatment in which what is odious must rebound upon my head."¹ A hundred French officers might have spoken in these terms, but their speech could only have ended in drawing down insult on themselves and redoubled blows on the captives; but an Indian fears one who is like him, and fears only him. Their slightest disputes end in death, and therefore they occur but seldom. The wishes of the Outaouac were respected as soon as heard. The prisoners were landed without tumult and conducted to the fort, without even their being accompanied by the least shouting.

In spite of these misdoings of the red allies, Montcalm's expedition was entirely successful. The English forces under General Webb lay at Fort Edward, not far off, but they were too weak to meet the invader. All Webb could or would do for Fort William Henry was to send it a strong reinforcement; then even before they had expected him, the enemy was upon that garrison. Part of the French army approached by land, while the surface of Lake George was dotted with two hundred batteaux and canoes filled with men. One August night two boats put out from the fort and were pulling right into the middle of this advancing fleet, when by the bleating of a sheep they were warned to turn and fly, with twelve hundred blood-thirsty warriors paddling after them. And close behind the

¹ This is probably a paraphrase of what the warrior was understood to say, which is scarcely likely to have been expressed in a style so 'French and fine.' The same remark applies to many other Indian sayings, as reported.

warriors, before their success was known, a canoe bore the indefatigable and undaunted missionary, ready with the sacred oil to administer the last rites of his church to any convert whom shot or steel might put out of the way of bringing further scandal on the faith.

Next day the English hastily withdrew within their defences, striking their tents and burning the wooden buildings outside, which showed that they were taken somewhat by surprise. Colonel Monro, their commander, father to the two heroines in *The Last of the Mohicans*, had under him 2300 men, with women and children. The fort was built by the lake side, with bastions, curtains and trenches, the walls of pine trunks buttressed with massive logs, and backed by platforms of earth and gravel. Close to it was a palisaded entrenchment on an eminence, where the greater part of the troops were stationed. The whole made a little town, which a larger army than the French general's would have been unable to invest regularly.

Now the Indian allies proved their use. Their scouting parties scoured the woods and mountains, almost completely cutting off the communications of the besieged. Prowling about the walls with their lynx eyes and ready rifles, they picked off the sentinels and made even deserting a work of danger. If a woman stole into the gardens beyond the trench to gather vegetables, a shot from some peaceful-looking cabbage plot laid her low; then the garrison durst not issue forth to bring in the body, and the patient savage would lurk in his concealment all day, that when night came he might crawl up to secure the scalp of his victim. The Englishmen could scarcely stir beyond their walls.

Another congenial task the Indians had, hunting through the woods the cattle and horses that the English had not found time to bring into cover. And as the French trenches were pushed on, they watched with eager and respectful interest a

device of warfare which was so much akin to their own strategy. So great was their admiration, that some of them even condescended to take the pickaxe and lend a hand to the French grenadiers, who were not ashamed to do this squaw-like work. But they soon grew tired of these long preparations and insisted on a battery being opened. Then they delighted to stand by the artillerymen, shouting like children at every successful shot, and proud when they were allowed themselves to point and fire the great guns. One of them having thus made a good shot, declined to risk a second trial. He might miss this time, whereas he already had won a reputation which would last him through life !

Two batteries were soon in play, and on this element Old England found wooden walls of small avail against such attack. Yet the defenders refused to listen to terms, expecting every day to be relieved by the movement of the army under General Webb, who lay within hearing of their cannon at Fort Edward. All the help he gave them, however, was a letter exaggerating the force of the enemy and advising a surrender. This messenger fell into the hands of the French ; the letter was found on him enclosed, it is said, in a bullet, where it did not escape notice ; and Montcalm thought the best thing he could do with this intercepted communication was to send it on to those for whom it had been intended.

Still the English commander tried to conceal his discouragement, and sent his thanks to Montcalm for the letter, expressing an ironical hope that the same acts of politeness might go on between them for a long time. But he must have been jesting with no light heart. In one week the trench of the besiegers had been pushed close up to the works, a breach was made, half the guns of the fort had burst or been dismounted, its stores would not hold out much longer, the defenders were in bad spirits to resist the attack which might be expected every

day, and which, if successful, would be certainly attended by horrible atrocities on the part of the savage assailants. Brave Monro consented to surrender on good terms. The garrison was to march out with all the honours of war; waggons were to be allowed them to transport their baggage to Fort Edward, and they were to have a guard of French soldiers against the fury of the Indians. Moreover, to mark his sense of the gallant defence made by the English, Montcalm let them take one of their cannon with them, and he charged himself with the care of their wounded.

Before concluding this capitulation, the French general assembled the Indian chiefs and explained to them the stipulations. All of them approved, though they must have known, and he might have feared, that they could not answer for their self-willed followers when blood and plunder were in view. The troops in the fort, however, were allowed to march out without molestation to rejoin the main body within the entrenchments, where they were to pass the night before beginning their journey to Fort Edward.

But soon the savage allies gave ugly signs of what might be expected from their notions of chivalry. Scarcely had the military ceremonies of surrender been gone through, than the Indians swarmed into the fort through its embrasures, eager for the pillage of which they had been promised a monopoly. And pillage did not content them. Several sick and wounded persons had been left behind; these unfortunates, now under the protection of the flag of France, were helplessly butchered. Out of a casemate, the infected atmosphere of which seemed insupportable, Father Roubaud saw an inhuman wretch issue forth displaying in triumph a bleeding head. This brutality only whetted the appetite for slaughter. Through the night, it is said, the Indians got drink from the English, vainly hoping thus to keep them in good humour; their own em-

players knew them too well and trusted them too ill to supply them with anything of the kind. In the morning they were hovering round the intrenchments in a state of smothered excitement which it would take little to blow into a flame.

The English, between two and three thousand persons, filed out and directed their march towards the woods, beyond which lay their inactive countrymen at Fort Edward. But almost from the first it was evident that they were not to get off quietly. The Indians closed upon their flanks, demanding with threats clothes, trinkets, and money, which durst not be refused. A blow from a tomahawk settled any objection to this bold beggary. They began to fall upon the sick and the stragglers, and to cut them down here and there before the eyes of their comrades. Once having tasted blood, the savages broke loose from all restraint. The stirring war-whoop arose on all sides, and the movement of the English across the plain became more like a battle than a march.

It was a battle in which the fighting must be chiefly on one side. The soldiers, finding themselves surrounded by these yelling fiends, halted, uncertain what to do. They had no ammunition, and as the Indians, growing bolder, pressed upon them, many of the men allowed their useless guns to be torn from their hands, and the clothes to be stripped from their backs. Dismay and confusion ran through the little army, and while some of them huddled together in helpless fear, others broke off and fled for their lives, making either for the woods or for the tents of the French, or back towards the fort, if the tomahawk allowed them to get so far. The ranks were turned into a rabble, the skirts of which melted into a rout, and the whole plain was covered with fugitives and pursuers. Those who were overtaken were either scalped on the spot or led off prisoners.

In the rear was Captain Jonathan Carver, who saw and

shared the worst of these atrocities. He had been robbed of his coat, hat, and waistcoat, not to speak of his money; his shirt was pulled to pieces on his back; he had two spear wounds; and he only escaped death because the Indians crowded upon him so thickly that they could not strike without hurting each other, so that for the moment he got away with his flesh scratched and torn by their rough grips. Round about him he saw his countrymen and countrywomen being knocked down and scalped, and the maddened savages kneeling to drink their blood. He had every reason, therefore, to take to flight in the way which he narrates:—

‘As the circle in which I stood enclosed by this time was much thinned, and death seemed to be approaching with hasty strides, it was proposed by some of the most resolute to make one vigorous effort, and endeavour to force our way through the savages, the only probable method of preserving our lives that now remained. This, however desperate, was resolved on, and about twenty of us sprung at once into the midst of them.

‘In a moment we were all separated, and what was the fate of my companions I could not learn till some months after, when I found that only six or seven of them effected their design. Intent only on my own hazardous situation, I endeavoured to make my way through my savage enemies in the best manner possible. And I have often been astonished since, when I have recollected with what composure I took, as I did, every necessary step for my preservation. Some I overturned, being at that time young and athletic, and others I passed by, dexterously avoiding their weapons, till at last two very stout chiefs of the most savage tribes, as I could distinguish by their dress, whose strength I could not resist, laid hold of me by each arm and began to force me through the crowd.

‘I now resigned myself to my fate, not doubting but that they intended to despatch me, and then to satiate their vengeance with my blood, as I found they were hurrying me towards a retired swamp that lay at some distance. But before we had got many yards, an English gentleman of some distinction, as I could discover by his breeches, the only covering he had on, which were of fine scarlet velvet, rushed close by us. One of the Indians instantly relinquished his hold, and springing on this new object, endeavoured to seize him as his prey ; but the gentleman being strong, threw him on the ground, and would probably have got away had not he who held my other arm quitted me to assist his brother. I seized the opportunity, and hastened away to join another party of English troops that were yet unbroken and stood in a body at some distance. But before I had taken many steps, I hastily cast my eye towards the gentleman, and saw the Indian’s tomahawk gash into his back, and heard him utter his last groan. This added both to my speed and desperation.

‘I had left this shocking scene but a few yards, when a fine boy about twelve years of age, that had hitherto escaped, came up to me and begged that I would let him lay hold of me, so that he might stand some chance of getting out of the hands of the savages. I told him that I would give him every assistance in my power, and to this purpose bid him lay hold ; but in a few moments he was torn from my side, and by his shrieks I judge was soon demolished. I could not help forgetting my own cares for a minute to lament the fate of so young a sufferer, but it was utterly impossible for me to take any methods to prevent it.

‘I now got once more into the midst of friends, but we were unable to afford each other any succour. As this was the division that had advanced the farthest from the fort, I thought there might be a possibility (though but a bare one)

of my forcing my way through the outer ranks of the Indians and getting to a neighbouring wood, which I perceived at some distance. I was still encouraged to hope by the almost miraculous preservation I had already experienced.

‘Nor were my hopes in vain, nor the efforts I made ineffectual. Suffice to say that I reached the wood; but by the time I had penetrated a little way into it, my breath was so exhausted that I threw myself into a break, and lay for some minutes apparently at the last gasp. At last I recovered the power of respiration; and my apprehensions returned with all their former force when I saw several savages pass by, probably in pursuit of me, at no very great distance. In this situation I knew not whether it was better to proceed, or endeavour to conceal myself till night came on; fearing, however, that they would return the same way, I thought it most prudent to get farther from the dreadful scene of my distresses. Accordingly, striking into another part of the wood, I hastened on as fast as the briers and the loss of one of my shoes would permit me, and after a slow progress of some hours, gained a hill that overlooked the plain, from whence I could discern that the bloody storm still raged with unabated fury.’

What were the French about all this time? Captain Carver, whose recollections of the scene were naturally bitter, accuses them plainly of winking at, or even encouraging, these horrors. He says the promised escort was nowhere to be seen, and that when he himself appealed to a French sentinel for protection, the man only called him an English dog, and thrust him violently back among the Indians. He declares also that he saw some of the French officers standing by with apparent unconcern; and he asks with a sneer if such a body of ‘Christian troops, most Christian troops,’ could not have prevented so shameful a massacre?

It must, however, be remembered that these troops were

posted in different places, many of them a long way from the plain across which the English were retreating. What the escort of four hundred men were about, does not clearly appear; but it might well happen that they hesitated to use their arms on their own allies, whom, in the excitement of the hour, it was hopeless to reason with; nor could they have fired on the Indians without injuring the English, and at the risk of bringing on a more widely-spread slaughter.

Montcalm was not a man to neglect the obligations of honourable warfare; of this he had given proof the year before at Oswego, by shooting six of his Indians who attacked unarmed prisoners. As soon as he heard what was now going on, he rushed to the spot, and eye-witnesses affirm that he used every exertion to check the outrages. He is described as flying from side to side, using prayers, promises, and threats, baring his own bosom to the infuriated savages, and exclaiming, 'Kill me, but spare the men who are under my safeguard.' One Englishman he tore by force from the hands of his captor, with the unhappy result that the other Indians who saw this at once murdered their prisoners, lest they should be cheated of the precious scalps. And though some may have shown cowardice or indifference, and all may have been at their wits' end in such a tumultuous emergency, many of the French officers earnestly followed the example of their general, and more than one of them received severe wounds in attempting to protect their late enemies from their uncontrollable friends. A number of the fugitives were received and sheltered in the French camp. Approaching the remnant of the English force which still held together, the Frenchmen shouted out, encouraging them to defend themselves, and advising them to hasten forwards. So they did, and the Indians, glutted with blood and booty, soon dropped off from the pursuit.

But only a few hundred of the English reached Fort Edward in company. Hundreds of others were killed or taken prisoners. The rest were scattered through the woods and came in singly or by small parties, if, indeed, they were fortunate enough to reach the fort, where, for some days, cannon were kept firing to guide them towards this place of refuge. Before he could arrive at it, Carver was three days in the thick woods, without food or shelter, though the distance was not more than fifteen miles.

The plain having been abandoned to the dying and the dead, the French camp and the captured defences became now the scene of this tragedy, whose moving and dramatic incidents the novelist could scarcely exaggerate. In the *Lettres Edificantes*, Father Roubaud tells a pathetic story, not without ludicrous touches, of his efforts on this occasion also to assist the victims of savage treachery. He might well say that no humane heart could remain insensible to the fear and grief of the English prisoners. We have already seen this priest's kindly disposition, which was not shown only towards the men of a Christian race. At another time he undertook to protect an ugly, deformed Indian, who had been taken prisoner fighting on the English side, and, bound to a tree, was being horribly treated, when Roubaud came up to drive off his tormentors, and stood sentry over him for hours, receiving no thanks but a silent glance of his dark eye.

On coming to the fort, he found himself surrounded by a crowd of weeping women, throwing themselves at his knees, kissing the hem of his robe, and uttering lamentable cries that went to his heart. But with all the will in the world, how could he console these poor people? How could he give them back the husbands and children whom they sought? What he could do, he did. A French officer told him of a Huron who had an infant six months old, and was like to let it grow

no older if some one did not interfere. He hastened to this Indian's lodge, and found the innocent baby fondling its spoiler and playing with his wampum ornaments. Eager to rescue the child, the politic priest began by flattering the Huron, praising the valour of his tribe. The cruel and cunning savage saw what he was after, and came at once to the point.

'Do you see this infant?' he said with ironical politeness. 'I found it abandoned. You want it, but you shall not have it.'

Roubaud urged in vain that the little prisoner could be of no use to him, that it would die for want of proper nourishment; but the Indian produced some fat with which he intended to feed it, and if it should die, why, he could bury it, and then 'you can give it your blessing,' he said with a sarcasm that these missionaries might well have laid to heart. A ransom in silver was offered him, but in vain. At last he declared himself willing to give it up, if he might have another captive in exchange. The good father was in despair; he did not deal in captives. But after consulting with his comrades, the Huron again abated his price. He would sell the child for an English scalp. Roubaud gladly agreed to this bargain, and set off to the lambs of his own particular flock, among whom he did not doubt to procure the desired article of traffic. We can picture him hurrying along, hot, dusty, fussy, and eager in his unselfish purpose, for the sake of which we need find no fault with the innocent egotism which peeps out in his narration:—

'Departing with haste to the camp of the Abenakis, I demanded of the first person I met, whether he had any scalps, and whether he would do a favour to gratify me. I had every reason to be pleased with his complaisance, for he untied his pouch and gave me a choice. Provided with one of these barbarous trophies, I carried it off in triumph, followed by a crowd of French and Canadians, curious to know the issue of

the adventure. Joy seemed to furnish me with wings, and in a moment I had rejoined my Huron.

"See," said I on meeting him, "see your payment!"

"You are right," he replied; "it is indeed an English scalp, for it is red.¹ Well, there is the infant; carry it away; it belongs to you."

"I did not give him time to retract, but immediately took the unfortunate being in my hands. As it was almost naked, I wrapped it in my robe; but it was not accustomed to be carried by hands as little used to this business as mine, and the poor infant uttered its cries, which taught me as much my own awkwardness as its sufferings. I consoled myself, however, with the hope of presently calming it by placing it in more tender hands.

"I arrived at the fort, and at the sound of its feeble cries, all the women ran towards me. Each one flattered herself with the hope of recovering the object of her maternal tenderness. They eagerly examined it, but neither the eyes nor the heart of any one recognised in it her child. They therefore retired again to one side, to give anew free course to their lamentations and complaints. I found myself placed in no little embarrassment by this retreat. Being four or five leagues distant from every French habitation, how could I procure nourishment for an infant of so tender an age?"

Fancy the poor priest at such a loss, with a baby six months old in his arms—a less rough but not more experienced nurse than the Huron warrior. In this difficulty he appealed to one of the English officers who could speak French. The officer spoke to his countrywomen, insisting on the child's being taken charge of and nursed till its mother could be found. A woman

¹ 'This is in truth the colour which ordinarily distinguishes the English colonists in these countries,' says Father Roubaud, rather exaggerating our Saxon fairness.

then consented to do so much for it, Father Roubaud, in return, promising to protect her and her husband. So, having procured three grenadiers as an escort, he set off with his little adopted family to the camp of the Canadians, where they might hope to be in safety. And here a happy chance rewarded his humane endeavours.

‘We had scarcely reached the entrance of the camp, when a shrill and animated cry suddenly struck my ears. Was it a cry of grief, or was it of joy? It was all this and much more, for it was the cry of the mother who from afar had recognised her child, so keen are the eyes of maternal love. She ran with a haste which showed that this was indeed her child. She snatched it from the arms of the Englishwoman with an eagerness which seemed as if she feared some one might a second time deprive her of it.’

The joy of this mother was complete, when Father Roubaud, after another weary walk to the fort before he could taste food for the first time that day, succeeded in uniting her also with her husband, whom she had never expected to see again. This hardly-tried couple may have been strict Puritans, but they are not likely to have spoken much evil of Jesuits for the rest of their lives. To round off the sentiment of the story, it is stated that the woman who had played the part of nurse at a pinch, was rewarded by having her own child restored to her.

By such friendly exertions some five hundred English were, in the course of the day, got safely collected under charge of the French soldiers, and sent, a few days later, to their own people. The Indians, however, now that the victory was gained, had already begun to disperse homewards, taking with them a large number of their captives. Many of these unfortunates were afterwards sought out and ransomed; but it is to be feared that not a few of them ended their days in the hostile wigwams.

How many persons suffered in this shameful affair, it is hard to calculate. Captain Carver, smarting with resentment at a crime which he declares 'not to be paralleled in modern history,' seems to state the case unfairly. He says that fifteen hundred were killed or made prisoners, and of the latter speaks only of a few as finding their way back by favourable accidents to their native country. The French writers admit that from twelve to fifteen hundred prisoners were taken, but account for the majority of these as restored through the earnest interference of the Canadian authorities, who naturally felt that they must exert themselves to throw off the disgrace of the broken capitulation. Roubaud reckons the number of the killed at from forty to fifty; other writers put it rather lower. But at the best, this disaster at Fort William Henry appears a very bad business. Colonel Monro, who, at the height of the confusion, had hastened to Montcalm to demand his aid, never got over the miserable doings of that day, and died a few months afterwards, as was thought, of a broken heart.

The cruel Indians did not escape without a terrible punishment, which was taken by many for the judgment of Heaven. It is said that, in their eagerness for scalps, some of them had rifled the new-made graves of bodies that had died of smallpox; or it may have been that the sick persons murdered at the fort were suffering from this loathsome disease. At all events, they carried away the seeds of infection with them; and though Carver may be again exaggerating when he exults that very few of those two thousand warriors ever lived to return home, it is true that the smallpox made greater havoc among them than all the rifles and tomahawks of their enemies, and a French historian notices that one tribe almost entirely perished. Thus both white men and red men had long reason to rue that August's work.

CHAPTER V.

THE INDIANS AT HOME.



It is by no means easy to give a true picture of the customs and circumstances of the Indians, which of course varied, to some extent, not only with the tribe but with the time. Even of those that pass for the most characteristic features of this life, some, such as tomahawks, were introduced with the use of iron; shaking hands, to which the Indians took kindly, was, no doubt,

adopted from us. The observers on whom we must depend, seldom had a very close view into the red man's life till it was already in a transition stage, and that both through contact with Europeans and through the efforts of reformers and earnest nor always unintelligent patriots who were called forth among the Indians themselves by the danger of extinction which soon appeared to threaten them. The old men of the tribe, as old men are apt to do, always said that things had

been very different when they were young ; and, as usual, it is hard to say how far they were trusting their memory or their imagination. All we can do is to try and catch a photograph of wigwam life in the backwoods, as it presented itself about a hundred years ago to the travellers and captives who took the pains to put their information in writing. In most respects, we may believe that this description holds true for all the Indian tribes living under the same climate and conditions.

Subsisting partly by agriculture and partly by hunting, the Indians dwelt in villages or camps, which they were obliged to move from time to time, since, in their ignorance of scientific farming, the ground soon became exhausted by their crops ; wood also would become scarce in the immediate neighbourhood. The scarcity of game, too, often drove them far afield, and the bands would split up at certain seasons, and roam about as small parties or solitary hunters. Their habitations were therefore slight, easily made and readily abandoned. All of us are familiar with the conventional picture of a wigwam, which was no doubt a common form ; yet there were wigwams and wigwams, varying in shape and size from the mere shelter of boughs put up by the benighted wayfarer, to the tent of matted reeds or skins carried about by the squaws of wandering prairie tribes, and from these to the 'long houses' of the more settled and less uncivilised Iroquois, in which this forest architecture reached its highest point.

The Iroquois villages, 'castles' as the early settlers called them, were often fortified against surprise by a strong enclosure of palisades—a precaution not unusually taken by the North American tribes. In the centre was the council-house, or public hall, and round it were closely and irregularly grouped the other houses, each of which would be the home of several families. Some of these houses were about a hundred feet long by twenty broad. Their framework was of poles, to which were fastened

overlapping sheets of elm bark for the walls, and other sheets were arched over to make the roof. Within, on either side, were platforms raised a foot or so above the damp ground, and divided by partitions of bark into so many boxes or stalls, open to the inside only, each of which was the snug sleeping chamber of a family. By way of carpet the platform was covered in each chamber with bark, skins, or rush mats; and above the heads of the occupants was a ceiling or ledge of bark, which served them as shelf or cupboard, or even as a bed for the restless children; while beneath their couches, between the platform and the ground, they stowed their firewood. They had also sheds outside and lobbies at each end of the house to store their possessions in; and high up among the grimy bark rafters hung the flitches of dried meat and rows of yellow corn which they might be preserving for the winter. All along the centre ran an open space, a few feet broad, in which at intervals burned the fires of the different families. Above the fireplaces appeared an opening in the roof, known as the smoke hole; but at the best the smoke did not readily escape through such a chimney, and in wet weather it would be closed up by a board of bark. This was no inconvenience to the well-seasoned inmates, nor did dirt and vermin interfere with their comfort. But the more fastidious stranger often found the interior of a wigwam a disgusting scene of darkness, smoke, smells, and other unmentionable annoyances, from which he was glad to escape even into the piercing wind, half-blinded, choked, and stifled. The same complaint was to be made of all wigwams, large or small; their atmosphere was tolerable only when the weather allowed light and ventilation to enter at the open door, at other times closed by a skin. Dogs and draughts, however, could always find their way in, and, as a matter of fact, were seldom absent from the stuffy den.

Though they were so much at home in dirt, like other

uncivilised people the Indians had a strong taste for bright colours and absurd finery, which the introduction of European manufactures helped them to gratify. Their dress was so suitable, however, for life in the woods, that while they adapted and imitated many features of the white people's costume, the backwoodsmen, as we have seen, often found it convenient to borrow the fashion of their garments. The chief material was deerskin, which a good squaw was skilled to scrape, and tan, and smoke, and 'make up' in no despicable manner. The small bones of the same animal furnished needles when no better were to be had; its sinews would serve for thread, and thin strips of the skin were also used as laces. And even if the mistress of the family might be careless about the style of her own loose dresses, she durst not neglect her husband's wardrobe. Dandyism was one of the ruling passions of this inconsistent being, the red warrior. When nothing else was doing, he would spend a whole day at his toilet, and a small looking-glass was a part of his equipment almost as necessary as his gun or knife. When the war-club of ancient days had become mainly a figure of speech, or a ceremonial ensign, like the royal sceptre and the court sword in our own life, the handle of it would sometimes be seen adorned with a little mirror, in which the chief loved to admire himself when arrayed for any public occasion.

The only indispensable article—the groundwork, so to speak, of savage attire—was a short kilt, or apron, or more commonly a breech-cloth tucked about the loins. This was quite enough for the purpose of lounging at home in fine weather; but when the gentleman went out, he drew on his soft deerskin moccasins, and his leggings of skin or cloth, reaching above the knee, and held up by strings fastened to his waist-belt. The moccasins might be beautifully embroidered with porcupine quills and coloured beads, and the leggings were in the highest taste if

fringed all the way down with the scalp-locks of his enemies. A 'swell' of the backwoods was so particular about the fit of his leggings that he has been known to have the limbs sewn into them, not thinking it necessary to change these elegant garments till they should be worn out. Ruffled shirts were much admired, but the white man's practice of washing found less favour; and if the Indian did display any linen, he generally daubed it over with blotches of paint, and handed it down, innocent of soap, as an heirloom in his family so long as its rags held together. Over all he wore a blanket which in travelling served him like the Highlander's plaid, as a loose and graceful drapery by day, and a warm covering to draw round him at night. These blankets, bought from the French or English, were either of gaily-striped patterns, or dyed with a green hue, that the wearer might better escape notice in the forest. For winter use the northern tribes adopted a rough overcoat with a hood, or a hooded cap covering the face and head, and they had mittens slung round their necks, without which their fingers would have been often frost-bitten. On occasions of ceremony, the principal men would appear in rich robes of fur. The entire skins of various small animals, otters, squirrels, weasels, and the like, were also fashioned into medicine bags and tobacco pouches, which the warrior carried at his girdle of worsted wampum or snake-skin; while heads, claws, tails, and hoofs were used as pendants and fringes wherever they could be fastened on. A mane of bristling eagle feathers, a tail of some bird or beast sticking out behind him, and smaller tails trailing at his heels, seemed to the red man most elegant and dignified appendages, nor did his spirited youth think shame to carry a turkey's wing fan in hot weather.

As for ornament, indeed, everything which shone, glittered, or clattered, was pressed into this service by both sexes. The

Indian, when he donned his holiday garb, carried most of his property on his back and limbs in the shape of brooches, bangles, beads, rattles, medals, feathers, bells, armlets, necklaces, gorgets, ear-rings, and even nose-rings; so that, like the old woman of Banbury Cross, he sometimes gave forth music whenever he moved. But his paint was the most extraordinary feature of this full dress. With grease, clay, ochre, vermilion, charcoal, and soot from the kettle, he daubed himself in hideous patterns, by which could be indicated not only his tribe, but his mood and intentions for the occasion; and no field-marshal, no parish beadle among ourselves, was ever more proud of his official costume than was the Delaware and Huron in all the appropriate bedizenment of war or festival. The ornaments most prized were those which proclaimed the prowess of the wearer, such as a collar of bear's claws, or the buffalo's head and horns, a hideous honour only assumed by warriors of the very highest class.

It is not generally known that the Red Indian was by nature not so red as he is painted. At birth his skin was little browner than our own; but by the frequent use of grease and pigments, by tattooing, and by constant exposure to sun and wind, it acquired that copper colour which is spoken of as red. Another popular mistake is that the Indians had naturally no beards, the fact being that from childhood their hair was pulled out with tweezers from all parts of the body except the head, where it was worn in various fashions, from a long, flowing mane to a narrow coxcomb crowning the shaven scalp.

It was very common to cut the cartilage of the ears and stretch them to an enormous size for the reception of pendants, which sometimes consisted of a whole stuffed bird, and sometimes hung down as far as the shoulders. It was no school-girl's work this ear-boring; only one side could be done at once, since it would be days and weeks before the poor fellow

could lie upon the torn, twisted, and inflamed lobe. From first to last the Indians must have bestowed, in every sense of the term, a great deal of pains upon their personal appearance. As modern fine ladies will do themselves serious injury by such practices as tight-lacing, the Indian exquisite sometimes died in fevered agonies brought on by the process of tattooing. But then each device pricked upon the skin was like a coveted order of knighthood, since it told of some illustrious deed, or some proud kinship, and every true Indian would have risked his life for such a decoration, which he durst not assume without warrant, or the lying record might be torn from his flesh.¹

The household furniture consisted mainly of skins and a few necessary utensils for cooking. The introduction of kettles must have been a great domestic revolution. Before, the kitchen range was supplied by rude earthen vessels; and hollowed logs were used as mortars in which the Indian corn was crushed with stone pestles. There were wooden bowls and ladles, often quaintly carved; gourds for drinking vessels; and mats and baskets, woven out of rushes or grass, such as may still be bought by the visitor to Niagara or the Lakes. Some of the most advanced tribes had an instrument for striking fire, the invention of which bespoke no small ingenuity; in this contrivance, by means of a twisted string, a stick was made to spin rapidly like a top upon a socket in a wooden board, till the friction at the point of contact generated heat enough to produce a spark in touchwood.

¹ M. Bossu, a French officer, mentions a case in which a young Indian of no proved merit presumed to tattoo his breast with the figure of a war-club, in order to impose himself as a mighty man of arms upon a girl with whom he was in love. A council was held over this piece of audacity, and it ordered that the mark should be cut out from his body. The Frenchman, out of humanity, offered to perform the operation in a superior manner, and did so by giving the young man a dose of opium, then applying to the place a blister of Spanish flies, which was effectual in destroying his rashly-assumed ornament.

For platters, cups, trays, tubs, boxes, barrels, and other utensils, bark was the common material; indeed, it is hard to think of a use to which this article was not put in Indian life. The son of the woods needed never be at a loss for a canoe to carry him, and a wigwam to shelter him. His bed-clothes might be made of bark, and so might his winding-sheet; it was his cradle and his coffin. His storehouse was a pit lined with bark. Ropes and string were spun out of its fibres, nets and belts were made of them, and even garments. It served him for paper. Certain kinds of bark burned brightly as torches. It was boiled or powdered for medicines and poultices. Meat could be boiled in a vessel or by dropping hot stones into the water. And it even supplied food, for when destitute of any other nourishment, the red man could live for days upon the scrapings of the inner side of bark, after wild rice and *tripe de roche*, and roots and acorns, had failed him.

Such shifts were only too familiar to the Indians. Irregular and improvident in their habits, starvation alternated in their experience with abundance and waste. When their little store of corn was destroyed, and game had become scarce, the women and children would shiver patiently by the fires, while the hunters might toil in vain through the pitiless wintry weather, returning home to smoke and sleep away their gnawing hunger; days and weeks together the kettles would thus be empty. In these straits the best side of the Indian character came out. Whatever food there was, would always be shared fairly among the inhabitants of the wigwam, unless, indeed, the warrior proudly denied his own wants in favour of the weaker members of the family. The Indian often gorged himself, indeed, at his meals, not always being sure when he might get another; but selfish greediness cannot be said to have been one of his faults, and it was often his fate to die literally of want. The saying on the frontier was, that two

hungry Indians could pick the bones of a whole deer ; on the other hand, let it be remembered that these men would go for days almost without food, and never flag or complain.

Hospitality was a sacred duty. Any stranger or casual visitor who entered the wigwam had its choicest—even if it were its last—provisions set before him forthwith. No fuss was made, no curiosity shown ; his coming was taken as a matter of course, and he would be left to take his own time for telling his name and business. On the other hand, it was held very bad manners for a guest to refuse what was thus freely offered him.

While James Smith was among the Indians, 'a Wyandot came to our camp. I gave him a shoulder of venison, which I had by the fire well roasted, and he received it gladly, told me he was hungry, and thanked me for my kindness. When Tontileaugo (his Indian brother) came home, I told him that a Wyandot had been at camp, and that I gave him a shoulder of roasted venison. He said that was very well, "And I suppose you gave him also sugar and bear's oil to eat with his venison?" I told him I did not : as the sugar and bear's oil was down in the canoe, I did not go for it. He replied, "You have behaved just like a Dutchman ; do you not know that when strangers come to our camp, we ought always to give them the best that we have?" I acknowledged that I was wrong. He said that he could excuse this, as I was but young ; but I must learn to behave like a warrior, and do great things, and never be found in any such little actions.' Such were the sentiments of an Indian gentleman, who would have been shocked at none of our customs so much as that of a reckoning at an inn.

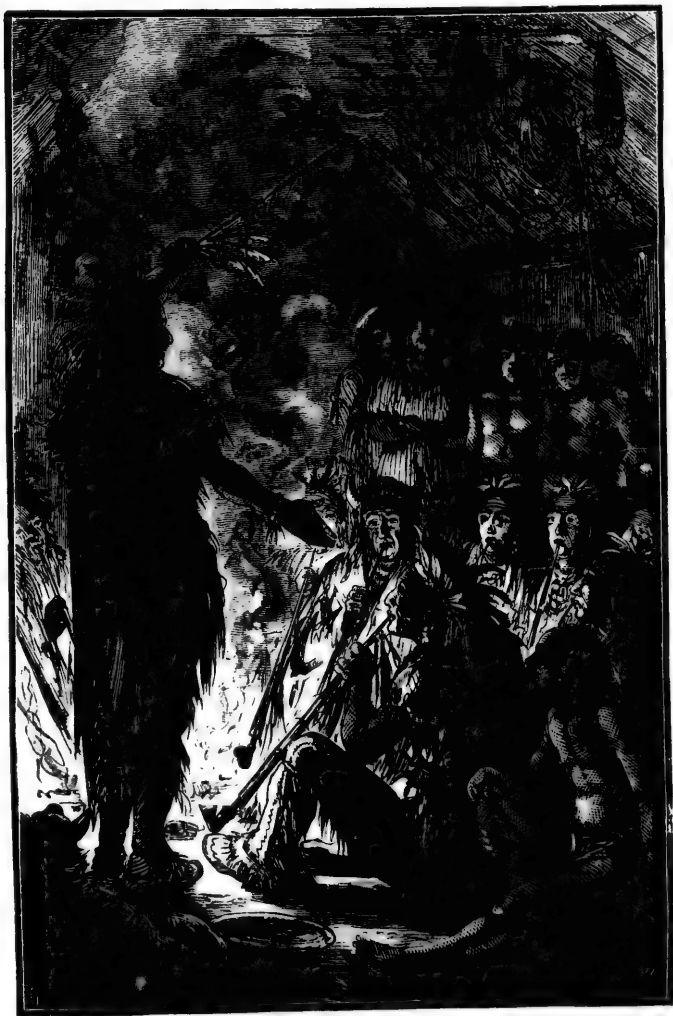
'Take no thought for the morrow' was, as Smith remarked, a precept literally carried out by this people. When provisions were plentiful with them, they sent out to invite their friends

to a feast. The messenger brought a chip of wood or a quill by way of card of invitation, and before accepting, the guest might inquire what was the bill of fare, which was sure to be distinguished rather by quantity than by quality. Not turtle soup, but dog's stew was the proper dainty on public occasions. If satisfied, he marched off to the scene of festivity, carrying with him his own plate and spoon. The proceedings must have been somewhat like those of a Sunday school treat.

Here is a paragraph from Mr. Schoolcraft's great work on the Indians, going to show that there is no new thing under the sun:—"There is a feast instituted at certain times during the season, to which young persons only are invited, except the entertainer's wife, and generally two other aged persons, who preside at the feast and administer its rites. The object of this juvenile feast seems to be instruction, to which the young and thoughtless are induced to listen for the anticipated pleasure of the feast. When the meats are ready, the entertainer, if he be fluent in speech,—and if not, some person whom he has invited for that purpose,—gets up and addresses the youth of both sexes on the subject of their course through life. He admonishes them to be attentive and respectful to the aged, and adhere to their counsel; to obey their parents; never to scoff at the decrepid or deformed; to be modest in their conduct; to be charitable and hospitable; and to fear and love the Good Spirit, who is the giver of life and every good gift. The precepts are dwelt upon at great length, and generally enforced by the example of a good man and woman and a bad man and woman; and after depicting the latter, it is customary, by way of admonition, to say, "You will be like one of these!" At the end of every sentence, the listeners make a general response of "*Haa!*" When the advice is finished, an address to the Great Spirit is made, in which He is thanked for the food before them and the continuance of life.'

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AN INDIAN PARTY.

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The viands were contained in large kettles, from which each visitor had his portion ladled out at once upon his trencher by the young men who waited. The courtesy of the host—who did not partake himself, but superintended the serving of his guests—was to give, and of the guest to eat, as much as possible. At certain ceremonious banquets, it was the etiquette to eat the whole of the food provided; not one scrap must be left, and if any weak-stomached member of the party could not finish his portion, he had to give a present to the entertainer, or hire some one else to help him.

The children of the village looked on through the door, or climbed on the roof to peep down the smoke-hole, or even tore the bark of the wigwam, as our penniless urchins try to get a sight of the inside of a circus tent. Ladies and youths were not admitted to these parties till the serious eating was over, when the squaws might be sent for to carry away the leavings to their children, while the gentlemen addressed themselves to smoking and conversation, 'some relating their warlike exploits, others something comical, others narrating their hunting exploits. The seniors gave maxims of prudence and grave counsel to the young men; and though every one's speech be agreeable to the run of his own fancy, yet they confine themselves to rule, and but one speaks at a time. After every man has told his story, one rises up, sings a feast song, and others succeed alternately, as the company sees fit.'¹

The Indian's diet varied, of course, with the neighbourhood and time of year; they ate, in short, whatever they could get. The staple food was hominy, the meal of Indian corn, which they boiled into a kind of porridge, and mixed with meat, fish, and other dainties; so the word 'mess' is perhaps most appropriate in describing their ordinary dishes. Their cookery was

¹ John Gyles' Captivity.

simple, greasy, and not pleasing to a fastidious taste, though no white hunter ever cared to find fault with it.

There are so many painful stories about the red man, that it is a relief to get an amusing one which may come in here.

In the early part of this century, when the Indians had not yet ceased to be a nuisance, and sometimes a terror to the settlers, a hardy backwoodsman and his wife, named Spicer, had made their home in a lonely part of Ohio. Their clearing and log cabin were a long way distant from the other settlements, and it is not to be wondered at if their minds were not altogether at ease towards their savage neighbours.

One night they were about to go to bed, when some one was heard calling outside. Spicer went out, and saw a tall Indian on horseback. He carried the carcase of a deer slung before him, and was armed with two rifles, a tomahawk, and a scalping-knife. On the whole, he looked a very undesirable visitor. He spoke to them first in his own language, then by signs and broken English; and the Spicers were not very well pleased when he managed to make himself understood that he wanted to take up his quarters with them for the night.

Hospitality, however, in these out-of-the-way parts was a pressing virtue; besides, a refusal might end in his doing them a mischief. So the worthy couple prepared to entertain their guest in the best fashion they could. His horse was accommodated in the pig-stye, for want of a stable. He was invited into the cabin, which consisted of only one room. His weapons were put in the corner, his venison was hung up, and Mrs. Spicer proceeded to cook for him a piece of it, which he cut out for that purpose. In her anxiety to give the visitor no cause of offence, she seasoned the meat highly with pepper and salt, as it would commend itself to the taste of those for whom she had usually to provide. The Indian ate a morsel or two, but did not seem to enjoy it. Conversation was not practicable

under the circumstances, and all parties soon agreed to go to rest. The goodman and goodwife went to bed; the Indian lay down on the hearth before the fire.

But none of them slept. The Spicers lay uneasily awake, keeping a watchful eye on their unwelcome guest, with a loaded rifle standing ready beside the bed. Their suspicions seemed to be confirmed when, all being quiet, the Indian roused himself from his feigned slumber, and sat up on the hearth. Cautiously he looked around, silently he gained his feet, stealthily he made his way across the floor to the place where his weapons had been deposited. The Spicers held their breath. Once more the midnight murderer glanced keenly on every side, to make sure that he was not observed. He drew his shining knife from its scabbard; he turned and stole on tiptoe. At this moment Spicer was about to seize his rifle and shoot the supposed violator of hospitality. Luckily, he held his hand for a moment. Then, instead of approaching the bed on which he fancied his hosts to be fast asleep, the visitor went up to the venison, cut off a goodly lump, placed it on the coals, and as soon as it was cooked to his liking, ate up every morsel of it, and went to sleep in real earnest.

The truth was that the poor Indian was very hungry, having lost his way in the woods and wandered about for some time before he saw the light in the Spicers' cabin. But he did not relish Mrs. Spicer's highly-seasoned cooking, and these suspicious movements, which had so nearly led him to his end, were only for the purpose of getting a meal more to his taste, without giving further trouble or offending his hostess by appearing to cast a reflection on her culinary skill. Perhaps there were not many of the rough settlers who would have shown such a spirit of politeness.

The Indians had a very well-marked and by no means low idea of personal behaviour, most of the traits in which can

readily be explained by their circumstances. Their taciturnity and self-control has become a proverb. A curious and garrulous disposition might pass in squaws and children, but among the warrior's talents must be one for silence. Towards strangers it behoved him to bear himself with watchful but dissembled suspicion, and never to betray his real thoughts by any sign of surprise or emotion. We must see that he had good reason for this habitual caution; and if conversation was not one of his strong points, it may be remembered that he had not much to talk about in the monotonous round of his existence. Could cows speak, they would probably find little to say to each other beyond praising the grass and complaining of the weather; and though the Indian's outlook on the world might be rather wider than that of a cow, it was still narrow enough to let him spend many hours of his day in mere rumination; so he learned to hold his tongue for want of knowing how to employ it. If he did not show himself very merry, why, life at the best could be no laughing matter to him, and it would be folly to laugh within hearing of those who might be prowling about in search of one's scalp. The *silent* laugh of Pathfinder may be recalled by readers of Cooper. This hero had a Christian sense of humour, but he too had been taught in the same school how laughing was not always safe. It was observed that the Indians of the prairies, less liable to be surprised by enemies, were more unreserved in their manners than their brethren of the forest, and not so dignified.

Yet the gravity of even the gravest red men has been exaggerated by writers who had few opportunities of seeing them off their guard, and who perhaps were inclined to heighten their characteristic features for the sake of effect. Travellers who have lived in their wigwams and been admitted to all the freedom of their domestic life, report that they could unbend themselves like the bow of Apollo. The old men had their

comic stories, not always very edifying, nor often, to a refined sense, very humorous. The young men were addicted to boisterous and highly personal 'chaff,' which it was a point of honour to bear without losing the temper. There were buffoons and jesters, who certainly were not commonly thought very much of by their fellow-tribemen. In Tanner's narrative, we learn that practical jokes were not unknown; his adopted brother dressed himself like a bear to frighten him, and very nearly had a bullet between his eyes for his pains. The present writer can vouch from his own experience that Indian lads can be as jeeringly impudent as London Arabs, and that the old Indians in these degenerate days are able to grin at a jest when they happen to understand it. Human nature was never quite consistent to any pattern; and even in the backwoods, there are examples to show us that the warrior was not invariably cautious, any more than Jonathan is always smart or John Bull always sensible.

With all his self-command, the Indian easily gave himself up to excitement to relieve the dulness of his life, and when excited he became like another being. There was one agency that seldom failed to prove but too powerful in turning the gravest and wisest into senseless maniacs. Before the coming of the white man, most of the tribes of North America used no other beverages than water, flavoured perhaps with honey or maple sugar, bear's oil, and harmless decoctions of roots and herbs. But, with fatal readiness, they acquired a taste for intoxicating drink, and a bitter boon it was which we thus bestowed on them. They did not care to use spirits in moderation as an ordinary beverage, but as the means of losing their senses for the moment in mad oblivion of care and duty. They were perfectly well aware of their weakness, and in sober moments would deplore it, but seldom could resist the temptation when it came within their reach. Sometimes, indeed, the

chief men of a tribe had resolution enough to beseech or force a trader to broach his kegs, before the first taste of their poison destroyed all rule or reason. Before entering upon a drinking bout, a party would of their own accord give up their arms, or would arrange that certain of their number should keep sober to look after the rest, and prevent them as far as possible from doing mischief to themselves and others. The sober keepers risked and often lost their own lives and limbs in restraining their frenzied and besotted companions. A mother would throw her child on the fire in her fury. A man would stab his best friend in a drunken frolic. The trader who furnished the means for such a carnival of beastliness, ran no small danger, unless he could secure himself and his goods in some place safe against fire and steel; but this bold and unscrupulous class of men were wont to encourage such orgies, for the sake of the enormous profit which they could get out of their drunken customers.

One of these traders, Long, tells us of a drinking bout which lasted four days and four nights incessantly, during which one man and two boys were killed, and six wounded. This was by no means an uncommon case. In a day or two a band of Indians would sell the whole produce of their winter hunt, their arms, equipments, and even the clothes off their backs, and, only when no more liquor could be bought, would end their frolic, as it was called by the callous traders, with nothing to show for it but wounds, grudges, destitution, and dreary repentance which comes so readily when it comes too late.

But whisky was not often to be had, and war was not always going on, and then, so long as his larder was full, the Indian had plenty of time to spend in mere blank listlessness. He would lie sleeping through half the day, stretched out like a log, or basking like a dog in the sun. He would sit squatting in his wigwam smoking, and thinking about nothing at all with

a great air of wisdom. This luxury of smoking which we have adopted from the red man in exchange for our drink, seems designed by nature as a resource and solace for the idle of all nations. The Indians of the backwoods used very mild tobacco, and generally mixed it with some kind of dried leaf or bark, which made it milder. Chewing and snuffing were inventions of our own. They delighted in long and large pipes, curiously carved out of red sandstone. The warrior carried about with him a smaller pipe, the stem of which was often the handle of his tomahawk. The pipes used on occasions of state were wonders of savage art. When we come to look into the religious and political institutions of this people, it will be seen that tobacco held a certain sacred character among them, as wine in the rites of the old world. So, in social life, the Indian pledged his friend or guest with a whiff of smoke, and the pipe was the prelude to all business and conversation, as well as an indispensable part of every public ceremony.

Visiting was not unknown among the wigwams, though the women were more given to gadding about than the men, who, as in civilised society, did not so much care to make calls without having some business with their neighbour. Nor were they without social recreations. They were indeed excessively fond of games, and not least of games of chance and gambling. Their favourite form of this latter amusement seems to have been one in which plum stones, or pieces of bone, differently marked on each side, were tossed like dice from a wooden bowl. At this game the Indian would let himself forget his stolidity, and gamble for hours with frantic eagerness, till he had staked and lost all his belongings. So engrossed could they become, that they have been known to allow their enemies to enter and leave their camp unnoticed while the play was running high.

In his love, indeed, of play, drink, and dress, the Indian was

too commonly qualified to assume the character which some people take to be that of a fine gentleman. Even their nobler sports and contests were degraded, like our own turf, by betting. At their shooting matches and ball games it was common to play for some stake, which was often of considerable value. And, stake or no stake, the jealous, proud warrior could not bear to be beaten. So Daniel Boone knew very well, when as a captive he joined his Indian master in shooting at a mark, and took good care not to shoot his best. And Blake, another captive already mentioned, when he was about to try his speed with the picked runners of the tribe, profited by a kindly hint that it would be just as well if he did not come in first.

But the most important amusement of the tribe was the dances, which were matters of ceremony as much as amusement. There were several of these, as the scalp dance, the bear dance, the beggar's dance, performed in honour of strangers, in triumph over enemies, to secure success in hunting, and on other religious and social occasions. The two sexes did not mix in the same dances. To the spectator, 'not to the manner born,' all of them seemed much the same, equally absurd and equally noisy; a ring of excited lunatics, almost naked or clad in strange disguises, performing uncouth gambols, capers, and contortions, while giving forth the most extraordinary howls and grunts to an accompaniment of rattles and reeds and drums, in which, as with all savage music, time was more marked than melody. But in fact each dance had its appropriate steps and adornments, and the songs bellowed or droned forth had been handed down from generation to generation and learned by heart with scrupulous fidelity, though they struck most European ears as sounds thrown together, if not at random, in imitation of the forest orchestra of animals. For hours the Indians would stand by delightedly

watching these antic mummeries, while the dancers, entering into their task with the highest spirit, would go on dancing, twisting, jumping, and yelling till they were utterly exhausted, and others came forward to take their places. Thus by relays this kind of fun would be kept up for whole nights, or even for days together.

Other dances were of the nature of a pantomimic performance. The warrior, skilled in the art, would step forth into the arena, and proceed to act the story of his exploits before the delighted eyes of the surrounding crowd. With his looks and motions he would show himself fighting, slaying, running away, hunting, and so on ; or, partly disguised in skins, he would imitate the gait and attitudes of some wild beast. When two men joined in thus representing a hunter and a bear, it was the nearest approach made by the red men to a theatrical entertainment. Such were their comedies at least ; but for tragedy, in most thrilling earnest, they had that dearest spectacle to Indian eyes, the torturing to death of a prisoner.



CHAPTER VI.

THE FATE OF A PRISONER.



As a victorious Roman general remained without the walls of the city awaiting an invitation to enter in triumph, so a returning war party of the Indians halted at a little distance from their village, and announced their approach by a succession of yells. These sounds were

not without meaning for the initiated—one for each scalp and for each prisoner, and, in a less exultant tone, cries which denoted how many of their own party had been lost in the expedition. At once the cries were echoed back by a wild chorus from the camp, where every man, woman, and child snatched up whatever weapon came first to hand, and rushed forth, like so many fiends let loose, to welcome their friends and to surround the shrinking captives with furious looks

and gestures—a sad foretaste of the horrors in store for them.

First of all, these most unwilling guests of a hostile tribe—tired, footsore, and feeble as they might be—must run the gauntlet, putting their best foot foremost to reach the cabin or painted post fixed on as the goal, and passing through the whole of the inhabitants of the village, each more eager than another to get a blow at the victim thus delivered to them by the fortune of war. If acquainted with the customs of the Indians, he took this ordeal as a matter of course, and tried to make the best of it. Courage was his only resource. An active and cool-headed man could often escape not much the worse, but there was small mercy for him who faltered or fell, or gave way to blinding tears in the midst of his perilous career. Yet some of their own accord chose to perish thus, and escape the more protracted agonies which awaited them further on.

When specially exasperated, the Indians would sometimes arm themselves with firebrands and stones, even knives and hatchets; but generally more harmless instruments were used, and, indeed, the aim was rather amusement than the infliction of serious injury. That was to come later. This was but a whet of their appetite for cruelty. Sometimes the poor fellow, with his skin not yet whole, had to run the gauntlet at every village of the tribe, like a sailor flogged round the fleet. It was very seldom that a grown-up prisoner was exempted from undergoing it at least once. But the ceremony might be postponed to be performed upon a large scale, and made the occasion of bringing the whole tribe together as for a popular exhibition. Occasionally, too, the unfortunate would be treated to what may be called an extemporary drubbing at the hands of Indians who could not keep their wrath for the public castigation; and the young and idle members of the

tribe might amuse themselves by insulting and frightening him, or by some such playful practice as holding his fingers in the bowls of their lighted pipes, or crushing his toes between stones, or throwing their tomahawks within an inch of his head. Perhaps, too, he was forced to dance round the scalp pole on which were displayed the bloody memorials of his friends, or in some other way to make sport for these Philistines.

The Rev. O. M. Spencer was captured by the Indians when a boy, and they had enough good nature to let him off running the gauntlet, because of his youth and his suffering from illness. But he gives us a description of it as undergone by another English prisoner named Moore. This was a tall, athletic fellow from Kentucky, who was expected to make good sport ; so a gala day was appointed for his ordeal, and from all the surrounding villages the Indians came flocking to take part in the proceedings.

‘After gratifying their curiosity in examining the prisoner, armed with clubs, switches, and other instruments of punishment, they arranged themselves facing each other in two rows, about seven feet apart, and numbering more than two hundred persons, each distant four or five feet from each other, extending three hundred yards along the level space between the village and the Maumee river. The chiefs and principal warriors stood at the head of the lines, within a few rods of the cabin selected as the goal ; while the rest of the men, with the women and the youths, promiscuously occupied the other parts.

‘Moore was now led out and stripped to the waist, when the Indians, aware of his strength and activity, tied together his wrists, for the double purpose of hindering his speed and of preventing him from retaliating on his tormentors, yet so as to afford him the means of protecting his face. Starting a

short distance from the head of the lines, he soon bounded through them, and breathing for a few minutes, returning with the same speed, had reached the middle of his course, when the Indians, fearing that from his fleetness he would run through with little injury (as most of their blows, instead of falling on his back, fell clattering on each other's sticks), half closing their ranks, attempted to obstruct his progress.

'Appealing in vain to their sense of honour and justice, frequently crying (as he told me) "Honour bright!" and "Fair play!" and finding that he would probably be severely beaten, he undertook himself to redress his wrongs; and so effectually did he use his feet, head, and right fist, kicking some and striking down others, and with his head overturning a number, that the rest readily made way, and opening for him an ample passage, amidst the shouts of the warriors, he soon reached the goal.'

The Indians did not resent such bold measures to frustrate their intentions. A man who behaved with courage under the trial, even at their expense, was admired and treated with distinction, which would not prevent his presently being put to all the more cruel torments, such as seemed to be worthy of so high a spirit. Some of the chiefs who had mixed among white men and risen a degree above their native barbarity, showed themselves superior to the pleasures of this brutal spectacle; but they had seldom influence enough to deprive their followers of it, any more than the head masters of certain English public schools can or could prevent a raw little new boy from being ill-used on his first night away from home. All they could do was, what they sometimes did, to give the prisoner a hint how to run so as to get off as easily as possible.

The ultimate disposal of the captives was decided by a

council, or, where no public interests were concerned, at the will of the Indian to whose lot they might have fallen in the division of the prey. If any of the war party had been lost in the expedition, the fate of so many prisoners was already sealed: one must be sacrificed to the manes of each of the dead yet unavenged, and the most brave and renowned was the likeliest to be the victim. On the other hand, any family which had recently lost a spouse or a child might claim one of the prisoners to be adopted in his or her place, according to the custom treated in the chapter on Indian Captivity; and the novelist is by no means romancing when he describes Lieutenant Lismahago as obliged to choose between a horrible death and a hideous old hag. The poor prisoner might be kept in suspense for a time, but when it was decided upon, certain signs informed him of his sentence. If a belt of wampum was thrown round his neck, it meant that he was to be adopted. When death was the doom, he was painted black or red, on the head at least, or over his whole body. Now he must call all the fortitude of manhood to his aid.

And now the hour arrived for which an Indian's whole training might seem to have been one course of preparation. All hope being gone, the prisoner steeled himself to die so that his name and tribe should come to no disgrace through any weakness of his. When nothing else remained in life, there was at least this crowning glory for the proud warrior:

'The stoic of the woods, the man without a tear.'

Tears and entreaties would have been of little avail in such a case. A certain dignified politeness on either side was held to befit the circumstances. The victim's last hours of ease were mocked with a show of kindness and hospitality, which sometimes even went the length of providing him with a wife from among the daughters of the conquering enemy—the bride

of a single night ! He ate his death feast among his murderers, and was led out into the enclosure, which, destined to such scenes, foul with the blood and ashes of their foes, was almost the most sacred spot of the tribe. A rattle was put into his hand, and above all the din of the exulting crowd, rose the dauntless death-song in which he loudly boasted of his own prowess and exploits, and mockingly defied his tormentors to do their worst ; and they needed no such challenge.

The unfortunate wretch, bound, and naked save his head, covered with clay to keep the precious scalp uninjured, would be fastened loosely to the stake, that he might struggle against and prolong his agonies in the slow fire built up around, so as to scorch without burning him. With hot ashes, live coals, burning splinters, and gunpowder, they tortured his quivering flesh ; and the women and children were often foremost in the hellish work. In all their cruel fury they were careful to deal no fatal blow ; their object was to keep him alive in pain as long as possible, while he taunted and provoked them to end his sufferings in an outburst of uncontrollable rage. For hours the miserable soul was often thus held between life and death. The executioners, gloating over their task, might even unbind him to repose, with his body all one dreadful wound, and gather strength for fresh tortures ; it is characteristic of the Indian warrior that he could sleep in this interval of misery. At last he would be scalped, and perhaps red-hot sand poured upon his bleeding head ; then they let him loose to stagger blindly for a few paces, and fall for the last time to the ground.

It is said that a Highland sergeant was once taken prisoner, whose natural 'pawkiness' made him more than a match for even Indian ingenuity. Seeing that it was all up with him, he thought he might as well die a soldier-like death and have done with it, as be slowly roasted for the amusement of these red-skinned heathens. So he told them he was a great

magician, and had the secret of making himself invulnerable to any weapon, which secret he would teach them if they consented to spare his life. The credulous savages, fancying his pretensions very probable, desired a proof. The sergeant then made a show of rubbing something on his neck, and invited their strongest man to strike with all his might. The blow descended, the head rolled on the ground, the poor Highlander's marches were over, and his cheated enemies had only a senseless corpse on which to wreak their fury.

But on such occasions the true Indian even courted suffering for its own sake. Two Iroquois prisoners, taken to Quebec by the French, were handed over to their *Christian* Indians to be tortured. Some of the French people, scandalized at the Governor's allowing such cruelty, found means of conveying a knife to them before the execution. One of them killed himself with it; but the other chose rather to go to the stake, where he loudly upbraided the memory of his companion as a coward and a disgrace to his people.

There are several such stories as this one told by Adair of a warrior who, after bearing the fire for some time without a murmur, scornfully cried out to his tormentors that they did not know how to punish a brave like himself. Let him loose and he would teach them the way to treat an illustrious enemy. This request appeared so little out of harmony with the Indian character, that it was complied with. The man then asked for a pipe of tobacco, and having lighted it, deliberately sat down, naked as he was, upon the burning torches which they had just ceased to apply to his body. There he continued calmly smoking, till his torturers could not restrain their admiration. A chief arose to express the general feeling, and said that, though the victim was devoted to death, and could not expect a remission of his doom after all the injuries which he boasted of having inflicted on their people, yet they would show how they

could respect such a brave enemy. And so, without further ado, he was released from pain by a friendly tomahawk.

Another Indian was no less resolute and at the same time more practical in a similar situation. He, too, desired to be allowed to prove to his enemies, even in the act of death, how much he was their superior, and asked to have given him for this purpose one of the gun barrels which were lying red hot in the fire as the instruments of his torture. The astonished crowd consented. But no sooner had the gun barrel been placed in his hands, than he dashed forward brandishing the glowing iron round his head, and quickly clearing a passage before him, leaped from a high bank into the river, dived through it, and amid a shower of bullets, disappeared into a bramble swamp, and eventually succeeded in making good his escape.

Many such narrow escapes are recorded. The strangest was perhaps that of a man who, according to Heckewelder, begged in his agonies for a drink of water. His tormentors in mockery brought him a bowl of scalding water, which he desperately dashed into their faces. He hoped this would procure him an immediate death, but the result was better than his hopes. The Indians thought he must be mad, and on this account resolved to spare him. As with other barbarous nations, there was for them something sacred in insanity.

But we need find nothing strange in the rescue of a man called M'Kimmon, captured by the Seminoles of Florida. The stake was set, the captive bound, the fire was about to be kindled, when the chief's daughter rushed forward, *à la* Pocahontas, entreating for his life, and vowing that she would perish along with the interesting stranger. So her father consented to a reprieve, and his merciful inclinations were duly confirmed by a sufficient ransom in cash. This romantic story follows the facts no further.

The escape of a man named Brady was effected by means

more in harmony with the scene of torture. He suddenly snatched a child from the arms of a squaw, flung it into the fire at which he was about to be roasted, and made off before the Indians could recover from their horrified confusion.

Then there was John Slover, one of the guides of Colonel Crawford's unfortunate expeditions. He had already passed several years among the Indians, and being now captured, was adopted into a family, so that the bitterness of death appeared to be past. After some days, however, he was led out to execution, probably in place of one of his comrades who had escaped. Yet he got away, and came back to tell this tale. He had been tied to the post, and the fire was kindled. When it began to blaze, there was not a cloud in the sky. But suddenly there sprang up a violent wind, followed by a heavy shower of rain, which instantly extinguished the flames. The Indians beheld this prodigy in silent astonishment. They agreed to keep Slover till next morning, when they might take a whole day's frolic in burning him. After dancing round him till late at night, they gave him, bound hard and fast, into the care of three warriors who kept considerably asking him how he would like to eat fire next day. At last they went to sleep, and at cock-crow the prisoner found himself able to work out of the ropes, and made off, taking a horse, and an old rug for his only covering.

But of all these instances of unhopèd-for escape, the most celebrated is that of General Putnam. Every American boy knows the story by heart, though many of us have never even heard his name. Its popularity in his own country has something to do with the fact that he afterwards took a prominent part in fighting the British troops, a part of history that English lads do not hear much about.

While a major in the New York Militia, he was engaged in the last great French and Indian war, which ended in the con-

quest of Canada. During the heat of a fight in the woods, his piece missing fire, he was made prisoner by an Indian, who, if he had not surrendered, would have tomahawked him on the spot. This Indian tied him to a tree till the engagement should be over, and before long Putnam found himself right between the fire of both parties. For more than an hour he remained thus exposed to friend and foe, without being able to get away or to stir a limb. The balls whizzed round him; they often struck the tree, and sometimes even passed through the sleeves and skirts of his coat. When his own party were driven back, he found himself not much better off. A young Indian coming up, amused himself, during a lull in the fighting, by hurling his tomahawk at the captive's head, trying how near he could go without touching him, and sometimes the weapon almost grazed his hair as it sunk into the bark. When he had passed through this ordeal, a barbarous Frenchman took up the work of torture. After threatening to kill him, he struck poor Putnam on the jaw with the butt end of his gun, hurting him so much that he was not able to eat for some time.

The French force being finally obliged to retire, Putnam was untied and taken along with them. They stripped him, took away his shoes, loaded him with heavy packs, and tied his wrists together so tightly as to cause him intolerable pain. With bleeding feet and swollen hands he did his best to keep up with them; but after they had hurried him several miles over rough paths, he was so much exhausted that he begged to be killed at once and put out of misery.

A French officer and the Indian who had captured him now interposed in his favour. His hands were untied, his load was lightened, and some one gave him a pair of moccasins. But when they halted for the night, the Indians, furious at the loss of many of their warriors, resolved to wreak their vengeance on the prisoner. He was stripped naked and tied to a tree.

Dry brushwood was piled round him in a circle. The fire was lighted in the midst of an exulting chorus of savage yells. Putnam gave himself up for lost. Already he felt the scorching agony, and writhed from side to side as the flames drew near him, to the noisy delight of his tormentors, who, as usual, had fastened him loosely to the stake, that he might prolong his sufferings by struggling to escape them. He tried to compose his mind, and bravely to bid farewell to life. But it was hard to die thus miserably ; and worse even than the pain was the thought of the happy home in which his wife and children were hoping for his return.

Suddenly the crowd was pushed aside, a man rushed forward to the fiery circle, and hurling away the blazing brands, began to unbind Putnam. This was the French commanding officer, who, hearing what was going on, had come at all risks to prevent such an outrage on humanity and the laws of civilised warfare. It was no light matter to rob the infuriated Indians of their victim ; but the indignant boldness of this officer overawed them, when entreaties and coaxing would have been of little use. They allowed Putnam to be unbound. Thus he was rescued, after tasting the misery of death, in an hour which he must have remembered to the end of his life. Being protected from further injury, he next day reached the French post at Ticonderoga, where he was treated with kindness as a prisoner of war, and in time returned to his friends, to live many a year yet in honour and usefulness.

Whatever other lessons in savagery the white people learned from the Indian wars, it was seldom they went so far as to torture prisoners. Often, however, the French and English soldiers could do nothing but stand by in horror at the cruelties of their barbarous allies, when, through the trees near their camp, they could see the fire casting a weird light upon the

ring of dusky demons, and had to stop their ears against the heartrending cries of the helpless victim. It was not always they durst interfere. Baron La Hontan, a young French officer, indignant to see some savages tormenting their captured enemies, and forgetting that he had not to do with lackeys or peasants, tried to drive them from their prey with blows of his cane. For this his commander thought himself obliged to put him under arrest, and the result proved that this was not done without reason. The Indian auxiliaries were so offended that they demanded the death of La Hontan, and were only to be appeased by being told that he was drunk when he gave way to this impulse of humanity. Drunkenness, in their eyes, like madness, was an excuse for any offence.

When greedy for human blood, they were as dangerous as if they had been drunk or mad. As well meddle with a bear and her whelps as come between Indian warriors and those who had been delivered to them by the fortune of war. But in process of time, these scenes, the atrocities of which, in early days, were simply too sickening for description, became modified by the presence of regular armies, and the influence of semi-civilised chiefs, till towards the end of last century they ceased to be a feature of border conflicts.

One of the last noted cases of burning a white prisoner in the backwoods occurred in 1790. The Indians were besieging a fort in the Cincinnati district, when Mr. Abner Hunt, a surveyor from New Jersey, fell into their hands. They threatened to put him to death if the fort were not surrendered, but those within refused to treat on such terms, believing it to be merely a question of the death of one white man or all. Poor Hunt was then tied to a sapling in sight of the garrison, and they could distinctly hear his screams, growing fainter and fainter, till nature could bear no more.

We have dwelt long enough on these repulsive scenes, which

cannot be passed over in a true picture of Indian life, and which have given to the Indian character a darker colour in our eyes than is due. The custom of torturing prisoners sprang from the cruelty which is natural to the savage heart, yet its extreme atrocities were the result of a virtue that may be too much neglected in civilised life. The same man who showed such relentless ingenuity in inflicting these agonies on his foes, was proudly ready to suffer the like himself, if fate so ordered it, and would have taken it as an insult if his own fortitude had not been tried to the full. Before we condemn him, let us not forget how the stake, the rack, and the lash have been used, and not so long ago, among ourselves. An Indian prisoner of last century had hardly worse tortures to fear than a deserter from the army of Frederick the Great, or a political offender under the knout of Russia. Against all the captured braves who ever writhed in a flaming sheet of bark, may well be set the innumerable victims of the Roman Inquisition, and of the unjust laws that for centuries have enslaved every country in Europe. Who can say that all the tribes of the backwoods produced such a monster of inhumanity as Nero or Philip the Second?



CHAPTER VII.

CHIEFS AND COUNCILS.



THE Red Indians, in some prominent features of character, were not unlike our public school boys, at least as these were before the days of competitive examinations. The generous emotional virtues were more congenial to them than those of prudence and reflection. Unblushingly lax in many matters of morality, they scrupulously observed

certain notions of honour, such as may be conceived to exist among thieves. While fiercely resenting any interference, however wise and well meant, with the rights and habits handed down from generation to generation, they were the very slaves of custom and public opinion. A pleasure-loving youth, who would scorn to soil his hands with any stroke of useful work, shrinks from no hardship or exertion in the athletic sports of his school; so likewise the lazy and turbulent brave became, on the war-path, a miracle of self-restraint and disciplined energy. Boys and braves agree in respecting no

authority, unless it show reason to be respected. And as a boy's will is said to be the wind's will, so it would be seldom easy to calculate on what an Indian would say or do in any circumstances where the tyranny of tradition left him free to follow his own wavering impulses.

Among such a people, no high political organization is to be looked for. The government of a tribe was a simple commonwealth, with no laws but custom, and very little authority but that of personal influence. There were chiefs, indeed, whose rank was generally hereditary, descending, as a rule, through the female line; so that the successor of any chief would be his next brother or his sister's son, to the exclusion of his own offspring—an arrangement common in savage life, which marks more regard for purity of birth than trust in purity of morals. But it was honour rather than power that was thus inherited. The nominal ruler, being seldom anything but the president, as it were, of the deliberations of the influential men of his tribe, had only so much voice in the management of public affairs as his own superior qualities gained for him; if he proved unworthy, he might readily be deposed, while at the best his office was what he could make it. The idea of contributing to keep any member of the community in idleness and luxury was one utterly foreign to the Indian mind. The chief had to hunt for his living like the rest, and sometimes, if he aimed at popularity, it might chance that his liberal gifts left him the poorest of the tribe, whose ruler was rather expected to pay than to receive taxes and subsidies.

It must be remembered that this civil chief was not necessarily, or even usually, the leader in war. There a commander owed his rank solely to his prowess and success. The Indian was always a devout hero-worshipper; and as every American boy is born a possible President, so any

Mohawk or Delaware might aspire to the highest place in the wars of his tribe, and to a high place in its councils, where, however, a certain precedence usually belonged to the members of some particular clan, and again to some family in that clan, the recognised head of it being established in this superiority unless a better man could be found among his immediate kinsfolk. This is believed to be a fair statement of the position of most Indian chiefs, a position scarcely so enviable as might be supposed, even if they had not—as is said to have been the case in some American tribes—to go through, by way of examination for their fitness, a course of fasting, physicking, imprisonment, lecturing, whipping, scarifying, and torturing generally, which would have effectually reduced the ambition of any modern candidate for office.

The councils were mainly composed of the old men of the tribe who had gained a reputation for wisdom, sometimes perhaps by the same art of palavering which is in such credit with more civilised assemblies. The Red Indian was a man of words as well as deeds, and loved, in the fullest sense of the word, to deliberate on all public affairs. No business was allowed to be transacted in a hurry; the answer to any proposal was never given till after due consideration; and on all important occasions the speeches were prepared beforehand, and the policy to be adopted was discussed in cabinet councils by the leading men before being openly brought forward. Holding fame in oratory only second to that of war, the Indian who had such a talent carefully practised it, and, Demosthenes-like, might sometimes be caught rehearsing his flights of apparently spontaneous eloquence in a lonely thicket, or beneath the roar of a waterfall. The peculiar style of this eloquence, sententious and figurative, is well known, and many of its metaphors have become familiar phrases in our own language. It is to be noted, however, that almost all the most distinguished orators

whose names have been handed down to us, such as Grangula, Logan, Red Jacket, belonged to the great Iroquois race, which in this, as in other ways, showed itself, as has been well said, 'the Romans of the New World.'

A picturesque, but to strangers a somewhat tiresome spectacle must have been these meetings, in which hours were often spent in adjusting matters of mere form. The native senators sat in a circle; the great pipe passed from hand to hand; all the traditional ceremonies were scrupulously observed. Each one might give his opinion, and it was the highest impropriety to interrupt or contradict him; then, when he had finished his say, there would be a chorus of '*Ho! ho! ho!*' followed by a pause for reflection before the next speaker presented himself, to be heard in turn with the same grave courtesy. But if he were an orator indeed, and spoke the sentiment of the majority, he would not fail to excite deep guttural exclamations of assent from the sages and warriors who had hitherto sat stolidly silent with their eyes fixed on him, or on the bowl of their pipes; and as he warmed to his theme, and, now breaking into a wild song, now aiding his words with lively pantomime, striding about the arena with more and more vehement gesticulations, poured forth the full torrent of his eloquence, the passions of his hearers would rise with his own, all opposition would be swept from their minds, and the policy thus advocated would be adopted by enthusiastic acclamation. Or, should opinion be still divided, there were various ways of taking a vote, such as handing round the great pipe of state, to be whiffed or passed on, shouting out the war-whoop, separating into two bodies round the rival leaders, and so forth. Unless secrecy seemed specially required, the proceedings were public, but the young and undistinguished members of the tribe were present only as spectators. The fact that only those who had had opportunities of experience

and practice in public business were qualified to speak or act for the tribe, had a tendency to make of an Indian commonwealth what we call an aristocratic republic.

The great theme of these debates was of course the foreign affairs, which too often afforded a 'burning question' to each restless and warlike tribe. We all know the symbols with which public business of this kind was transacted. The ceremonies of declaring war have been elsewhere described. A treaty was heralded by the approach of the peace pipe, answering to our flag of truce, its long stem decked with feathers and other finery, the bearers of which were scrupulously respected in their character of ambassadors. As credentials of their mission, they brought presents, which usually took the form of belts and strings of wampum. These were made of small shells,¹ black, white, and purple, woven into hieroglyphic devices. The ambassador would end each clause of his message with the formula, '*This belt confirms my words,*' at the same time delivering a piece of wampum of size and pattern according to the importance and nature of the occasion. The great war-belt of Pontiac was six feet long and four inches wide, wrought with the devices of forty-seven tribes in alliance with him. When sent as a summons to war, the belt would be all of black wampum, or stained red, but the groundwork of a peace-belt was white.

When the object was to appease an injured people, the envoys would present several belts along with other gifts by way of peace-offering, giving a figurative meaning to each. Thus it would be explained that one belt was to wipe away the blood that had been shed, another to smooth the graves of the dead, another as a cordial to cheer the spirits of their friends, another to condole with them on their losses, and so on till the propitiation was considered sufficient. These belts,

¹ In later times an artificial imitation was introduced by the white men.

which hung upon a line in view of all the council while the business was going on, were afterwards carefully treasured up, and, in fact, served as the records of the tribe, the old men always being able to interpret their devices, and to recall the occasion on which they had been delivered. It was the business of the women, also, to imprint upon their minds the particulars of these transactions, that they might teach them to the children.

In most of the reports which we have of such proceedings, it is difficult to know how far the speeches have been rightly translated ; and if we wish a characteristic sample of Indian oratory, we cannot do better than take the speech of a white man well acquainted with their metaphors, and using these perhaps more profusely than they themselves would have done. At the end of the war of Pontiac, an English agent, George Croghan, made an address at an Indian council which, as Parkman remarks, gives us a good idea of the style adopted on such occasions :—

‘Children, we are very glad to see so many of you here present at your ancient council fire, which has been neglected for some time past ; since then, high winds have blown and raised heavy clouds over your country. I now, by this belt, rekindle your ancient fire, and thro’ dry wood upon it, that the blaze may ascend to heaven, so that all nations may see it and know that you live in peace and tranquillity with your fathers the English.

‘By this belt I disperse all black clouds from over your heads, that the sun may shine clear on your women and children, that those unborn may enjoy the blessings of this general peace, now so happily settled between your fathers the English and you and all your younger brethren to the sun-setting.

‘Children, by this belt I gather up all the bones of your

deceased friends and bury them deep in the ground, that the buds and sweet flowers of the earth may grow over them, that we may not see them any more.

‘Children, with this belt I take the hatchet out of your hands and pluck up a large tree, and bury it deep, so that it may never be found any more ; and I plant the tree of peace, which all our children may sit under, and smoke in peace with their fathers.

‘Children, we have made a road from the sun-rising to the sun-setting. I desire that you will preserve that road good and pleasant to travel upon, that we may all share the blessing of this happy union.’

Next day Pontiac made an answer in the same strain. By such ceremonies all grudges were understood to be laid aside, peace firmly established, and mutual injuries forborne—till the next time ! It was seldom that the bloody hatchet was buried beneath the roots of a mighty tree or flung into the depths of a lake ; more commonly it might be said to be covered with a little loose earth, where it could soon be brought to light again. So little political cohesion was there in an Indian tribe, that a few turbulent and ambitious young men often brought on a war which the chiefs and the council wished to avoid, though perhaps this did not so often happen as that hostile acts, which it was convenient for the authorities to disavow, were blamed on the uncontrollable ardour of young warriors.

To turn from foreign to home affairs, the maintenance of social order and the administration of justice were almost entirely in the care of public opinion, which was far more effectual in restraining acknowledged crime than any formal statutes and fixed penalties could have been. Disputes between members of the same tribe were remarkably rare, considering the way in which they lived together. So long as an Indian

tribe remained poor, good and evil fortune was shared among neighbours, and there was little temptation to fraud. The warrior was proud to rob his enemies, and would not disdain to pilfer from travellers, but in his own wigwam he knew no need for locks and bars.

Wrongs were redressed by an injured party with his own hand, or by his nearest relatives in the case of murder. Revenge, indeed, was among the most sacred of duties to the Indian. It was binding first on the family of a victim, but also in some degree on his clan and tribe. The feud of blood was handed down from generation to generation. The very children were taught to practise this diabolic rule. Adair mentions the case of a little boy who accidentally wounded a companion with his childish arrow, while shooting in a field of high corn. Among ourselves, we can scarcely imagine a boy so ungenerous as to bear rancour for such an injury; but the wounded urchin in this case watched and waited with precocious ferocity till he was able to inflict a precisely similar hurt on the other. Then, and only then, 'all was straight' between them. Adair is not the only man who has 'known Indians to go a thousand miles for the purpose of revenge, in pathless woods, over hills and mountains, through cane swamps, full of grape vines and briars, over broad lakes, rapid rivers, and deep creeks, and all the way endangered by poisonous snakes, if not with the rambling and lurking enemy; while at the same time they were exposed to the extremities of heat and cold, the vicissitudes of the seasons, to hunger and thirst.'

Any one who had the misfortune to kill a red man, however innocently, would have to deal with passion or caprice rather than any principle of justice. It is not long ago since an Englishman, hunting by night in Canada, fired into a thicket where, as he thought, he saw a deer's eyes gleaming. To his horror, a groan followed the shot, and he found that he had

killed an Indian. Full of sorrow and self-reproach, he put the body in his canoe and took it to the cabin of the dead man's brother, whom he knew. To him he explained the unfortunate circumstances of the case, expressing his unfeigned grief, and offering to make any atonement in his power. The brother listened without a word, walked into his cabin, got his rifle, and shot the hunter dead. This was no more than Indian equity.

'Blood for blood' was the law. If the real criminal could not be got at, one of his kin or race would have to pay the penalty; so many a white man has expiated a murder which he never even heard of. And when a tribe fell into ill-will with its neighbours on account of bloodshed, the authors of which they could not deliver up, it was no extraordinary effort of patriotism for the required number of victims to come forward and suffer as voluntary substitutes to clear the whole community from guilt. But the manslayer had seldom the art or even the intention to hide his deed, and no sanctuary was permitted to shelter him till the bitterness of it had passed away.¹ There was nothing for him but to cut himself off from his kindred by flight, or to depend on the mercy or the powerlessness of the avenger of blood. Presents were often accepted in satisfaction for a murder, and drunkenness was generally looked upon as an extenuating circumstance. Yet if the relatives of the dead could and would insist on their rights, and were not to be moved by the pleadings of the murderer's kin, nor by the entreaties of the old father or the little child who would be put forward to intercede piteously on his behalf, he had no choice but to submit to their expiating hands, and the well-regulated

¹ In the south, there seems to have been places set apart as 'cities of refuge,' a fact not overlooked by those who would connect the Indians with the lost tribes of Israel, but I can find no trace of anything of the kind among the northern tribes.

Indian mind prided itself on the dignity with which such a fate might be met.

In the narrative of John Tanner's captivity, we have an account of what may be called a trial for murder. A notorious bravado named Wa-me-gon-a-biew had killed another Indian probably in a quarrel or fit of jealousy, and this is how the affair was settled :—'Wa-me-gon-a-biew went by himself and dug a grave wide enough for two men ; then the friends of Ke-zha-zshoons brought his body, and when it was let down into the grave, Wa-me-gon-a-biew took off all his clothes except his breechcloth, and sitting down naked at the head of the grave, drew his knife, and offered the handle to the nearest male relative of the deceased. "My friend," said he, "I have killed your brother. You see I have made a grave wide enough for both of us, and I am now ready and willing to sleep with him." The first and second, and eventually all the friends of the murdered young man refused the knife which Wa-me-gon-a-biew offered them in succession. The relations of Wa-me-gon-a-biew were powerful, and it was fear of them which now saved his life. The offence of the young man whom he had killed had been the calling him *Cut-nose*. Finding that none of the male relations of the deceased were willing to undertake publicly the punishment of his murderer, Wa-me-gon-a-biew said to them, "Trouble me no more now or hereafter about this business ; I shall do again as I have now done if any of you venture to give me similar provocation."

The personal influence and connections of the evil-doer will thus be seen to have had much to do with his chance of escaping his deserts. The same author mentions another case, perhaps a more characteristic one than the dramatic scene just related, and showing how little certainty there was in this infliction of punishment at the bidding of passion.

A young man mortally stabbed a comrade without the

slightest cause, except that in a fit of maudlin drunkenness it occurred to the slaughterer, while staggering about knife in hand, that his father had been killed on that spot by white men several years before. When he had slept off the debauch and came to be told what he had done, and that the victim was not expected to recover, he seemed to be very sorry, as well he might. His friends made up a present of cloth and such other things as they could spare, with which he presented himself beside the dying man, and addressing his friends, said : ' I have killed this your brother, but I knew not what I did. I had no ill-will against him, and when, a few days since, he came to our camp, I was glad to see him. But drunkenness made me a fool, and my life is justly forfeited to you. I am poor and among strangers, but some of those who came from my own country with me would gladly bring me back to my parents ; they have therefore sent me with this small present. My life is in your hands, and my present is before you : take whichever you choose ; my friends will have no cause to complain.'

With this he sat down, and bowing his head and covering his face, resigned himself to their will. But the mother of his victim came forward and accepted his excuses for herself and her children. ' I know,' she said, ' you have not done this on purpose, and why should your mother be made to cry as well as myself ?' She declared, *however*, that she could not answer for the father, who was then absent, but would use her influence to appease him.

Now comes the strangest part of the story. At the funeral a quantity of presents had been sent to be disposed of with the deceased man according to Indian custom. The mother, instead of putting them in the grave, offered them as prizes for various athletic games, which were accordingly held forthwith in honour of the deceased, as Æneas did reverence to the *manes*

of his father. And who but the murderer won the chief prize, which was given for a foot-race! The old woman thereupon proposed to him that he should become her son in place of the man he had killed; and he willingly agreed to this curious way of arranging an unpleasant business. Still, however, he was afraid of the father and the other friends of his victim; but in time these suspicions wore off, and he continued a contented member of the family to which he had been introduced under such singular circumstances.

What may be called public condemnations and executions sometimes took place in the instance of persons accused of cowardice, witchcraft, or such high crimes, occasionally even in aggravated cases of murder. But such an execution was usually more like what we should call an assassination; once resolved upon, it was carried out as speedily and secretly as possible, the criminal being stabbed in the dark entrance of his wigwam, or enticed outside the village to a solitary spot, where the fatal blow was his first warning at once of the charge and the sentence.

Lafitau tells the following story of an atrocious crime and its punishment among the Iroquois. A husband and wife quarrelled, whereupon she left him and joined her brothers on a hunting expedition. His evil passions inciting him, he and some of his comrades attacked the lodge of her party by night, and would have murdered her in her sleep. The wife, however, having some reason to suspect something of the kind, was on the alert; she and the youngest of her brothers, a boy of fifteen, contrived to escape, while the rest of her brothers were killed after a struggle. Not deceived as to who the assailants were, though they had hoped to be taken for a party of the enemy, she hid herself in a hollow tree, and passed an anxious night with her young companion.

The murderers searched for her in vain, and next morning,

being unable to hit on her trail, set out on their return to the village. So did the woman and the boy, stealing cautiously through the woods by another way, and using all their cunning to avoid discovery. One night they had taken up their quarters in the branches of a tree, when the husband and his friends came soon afterwards to encamp below it. This night, however, that again must have been a long and wakeful one to these two, went by safely, though the least sound or movement would have betrayed them in their dangerous and yet ludicrous position. When the coast was clear, they descended, and hurried forward on the wings of fear, till, by taking a shorter path, or because they were not encumbered by game, they managed to arrive at their village before the murderers.

Her tale being told, she did not want for sympathy and indignation against her treacherous husband. A council was held, at which she narrated the circumstances of the crime, as far as she had been witness of it, and especially mentioned that one of the slaughterers had been severely bitten in the hand by his expiring victim. The affair appeared so horrible, that the council charged themselves with the duty of vengeance. A messenger was sent out to meet the hunters and hasten their return, telling them that they were invited to a feast, to be held in their honour on that very day. On arriving, all unsuspecting, they entered the council-house, where the feast was prepared, and were received with the ordinary ceremonies of welcome. All took their seats, but by the side of each of the doomed men, a young Indian, well instructed in the part he had to play, placed himself with a careless air of friendship. Not a face gave any hint as to what was about to take place. Inquiries were made of the hunters as to their success, and the hand of one of them being perceived to be bound up, he was asked, in an indifferent tone, what might be the matter

with it. He replied coldly that it had been bitten by a beaver.

Suddenly the woman and the boy appeared upon the scene, having till now been hidden at the other end of the wigwam. At the first sight of her, the husband must have guessed the truth, but neither he nor his accomplices attempted to stir. Before all, she poured forth the tale of her wrongs; and no sooner had she finished, than out flew the knives of the appointed ministers of justice sitting among the dumbfounded murderers, and in a moment, without a struggle or a cry, the guests at this banquet, a more solemn one than they thought, were dead men.

Such officials as magistrates and constables, then, had little to do in the life of these forest commonwealths, while every Indian was ready to serve as an executive or if his own interests or those of his tribe seemed to demand it. Some of the old explorers, indeed, have left descriptions of sachems and caciques dealing out justice with their own hands, beating or killing the culprit, who meekly knelt to receive his punishment at their mere will and word. But this was among the Indians of the coast; the more spirited tribes of the backwoods knew nothing of such paternal government: no feature in their character was more marked than their impatience of control. Of the red warrior's democratic antipathy to the restraints of arbitrary power, there is an amusing instance in a tale which also exhibits him in the unusual role of a friend of humanity: the hero of this tale was a brave named Silverheels.

He one day came on the parade ground of an English fort, just as a poor soldier was being stripped and tied up to the halberts to receive five hundred lashes, according to the harsh military discipline of that day. Silverheels was much shocked to see a man so disgraced, and went up to communicate his

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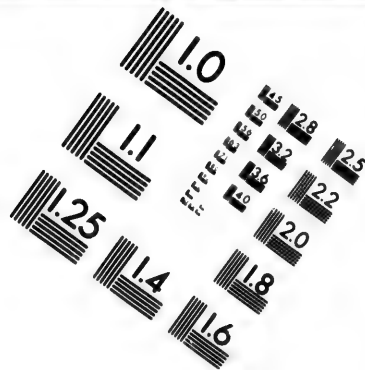
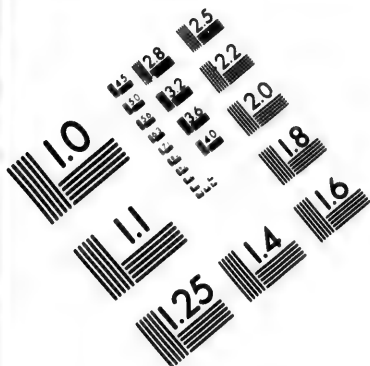
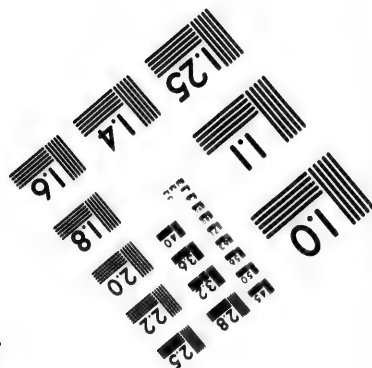
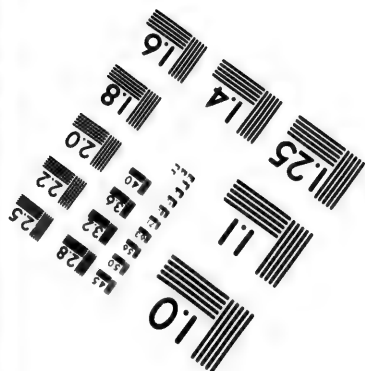
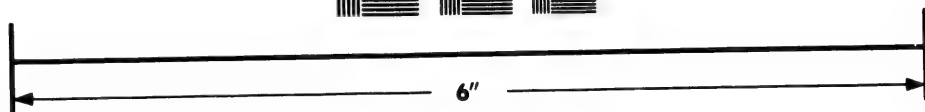
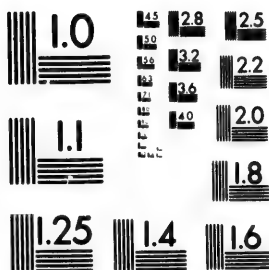


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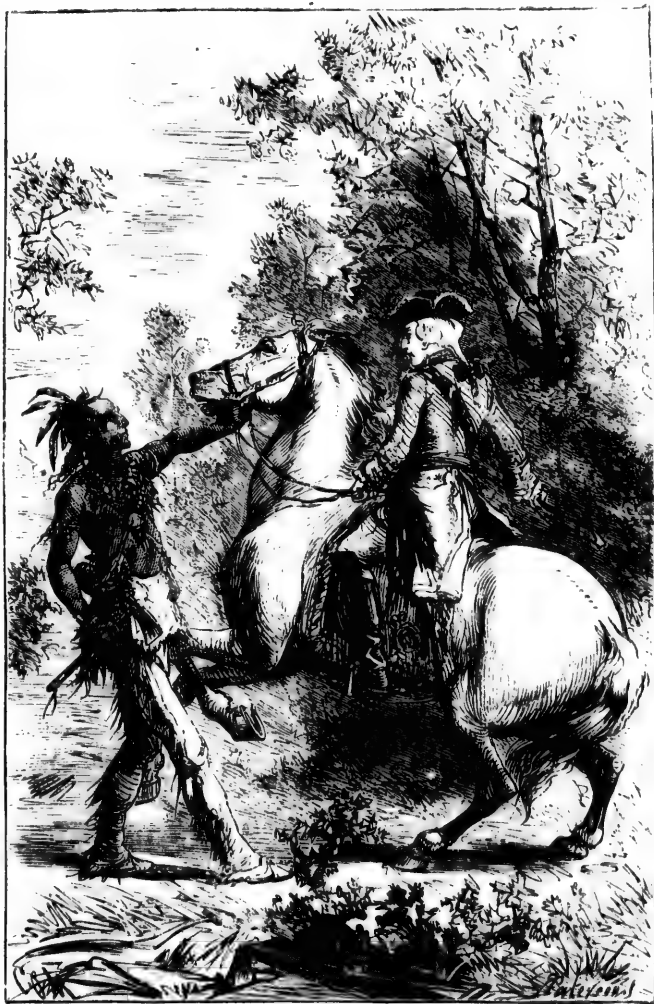


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SILVERHEELS AND THE OFFICER.

sentiments to the commanding officer, who did not choose to discuss the matter with him, but sent a soldier to tell him that his presence was not desired.

‘Waugh! waugh! But what is the warrior tied up for?’ persisted the Indian.

‘For getting drunk,’ answered the soldier.

‘Is that all?’ said Silverheels. ‘Then get another set of halberts and tie up your chief, for he gets drunk twice a day.’

Presently, as the drummers were about to do their duty, he again made his way up to the officer, and said: ‘Father, are you a warrior, or do you only think yourself so? If you are brave, you will not suffer your men to strike this soldier whilst I am in the fort. Let me advise you not to spill the good English blood which to-morrow may be wanted to oppose an enemy.’ And when the officer was not to be moved by such an appeal, he exclaimed with indignation, ‘Well, then, flog him, and we shall soon see whether you are as brave a warrior as an Indian.’

A day or two afterwards, this officer was riding three miles from the fort, when Silverheels suddenly sprang up from the ground where he had been lying in wait, seized the horse’s bridle, and challenged the rider to dismount and fight. The officer, having no mind for such a combat, gave his horse the spur; but Silverheels was not to be balked thus. With one blow of his tomahawk he killed the horse, and the rider rolled on the ground. As soon as he got on his feet, Silverheels repeated his challenge, reminding him of his cruelty to the soldier, saying that he had a mind to serve him as he had done the horse, and threatening to expose him as a coward among his brother officers. The unfortunate martinet, who may be excused for shrinking from such a duel, was glad to get home on foot with his scalp safe.

But next day, Silverheels kept his promise by coming to the fort with the horse’s scalp, and doing his best to bring the

commander into contempt by relating the story of their encounter and taunting him with his behaviour. He declared that he was about to go on the war-path, where he would make an old woman prisoner and send her to command the fort, as the great chief was only fit to fight with a dog or a cat! The end of the story represents this lofty moralist begging for a drink of rum. Soon afterwards he did go to war, and was killed, not altogether, one may suppose, to the dissatisfaction of the disciplinarian officer whom he had persecuted to such purpose.

This was by no means a solitary instance of horror at punishments that might seem mercy compared to the tortures which Indians did not scruple to inflict upon occasion. In *Tales of the North-West*, an interesting little book published some fifty years ago, which is evidently the result of personal experience of Indian life, there is a similar story of a chief who, while held as a hostage by a body of English troops, saw a soldier flogged with the same feelings with which a humane woman might assist at a case of vivisection, and at once sent a message to the commanding officer, requesting that he himself might be shot forthwith, as he no longer wished to live among men capable of such enormities! As for imprisonment, no death could have been more terrible to the red man's imagination, if, indeed, he could even imagine the protracted misery of a dungeon.

It was not easy to rule a people of such independent temper; yet Indian politics were a career open to talent, and men of ambition and force of character were often able to gain an unusual ascendancy among their fellows, by working on their prejudices and superstitions and making skilful use of opportunities. Hence, while such a popular constitution as has been described was the rule, there were exceptional forms of government. Even squaw-sachems were known, in spite of the abasement of their sex, to exercise great authority. Several

tribes were sometimes allied in confederacies under some head, such as Powhatan and the Bashaba of Penobscot, commemorated in the narrative of Captain John Smith ; and thus, in later times, great chiefs like Pontiac and Tecumseh were able to unite the warlike nations of the West in the bond of a common fear and a common hatred. Among the southern tribes, it may be remarked, less democratic forms of government were found, as in the case of the 'Grand Sun' of the Natchez, whose position answered more to our medieval idea of a ruler.

In the narratives of the early adventurers, these potentates generally figure under the high-sounding titles of kings and emperors, but their pretensions showed so large mostly through the mist of ignorance. As Mr. S. G. Drake suggests, the conquerors had an interest in magnifying the scale of their victories ; hence, perhaps, these false estimates as to the power and dignity of the conquered leaders. As for representing—as is sometimes done in old pictures—chiefs with crowns and sceptres, nothing could be more absurd. They possessed no other insignia than the scalps of their enemies, or trophies of valour won from the bear and buffalo, unless it were the medals with which the English and American Governments made a custom of decorating the leading men of friendly tribes. In short, 'leading men' would generally be the best translation of such titles as *sachem*, *sagamore*, *cacique* ; yet even now the popular mind is scarcely disabused of its exaggerated and falsely-coloured conception of the character of an Indian chief.

When, in 1710, five Iroquois chiefs visited the court of Queen Anne, they were received with great attention, and followed everywhere by the rabble, who regarded them with wonder, little understanding that in their own country they had less authority than the captain of one of our men-of-war. Swift, Steele, and Addison all mention them as the lions of

the day. During the last century, many such lions came across the Atlantic, exciting much the same sort of interest as the Shah of Persia or the Sultan of Zanzibar in our own times. Of all these visits, perhaps the most distinguished was that of Joseph Brant, in 1786. He held a commission in the British army, and had been our faithful ally throughout the revolutionary war; so he was received with open arms in the best London society, and seems to have borne himself there with remarkable ease and propriety.

There is an amusing anecdote of his experience of fashionable life. One night he was at a fancy ball, attired in full Indian costume, paint, feathers, weapons, and so forth, making one of the most striking figures in the room. So thought another of the guests, a turbaned Turk, who, after surveying the chief with great admiration, took the licence of pleasantry permitted on such occasions to pull his painted nose, supposing that it was a mask. Instantly the fearful war-whoop rang through the air, and a bright tomahawk flashed in the eyes of the amazed Turk, while the gay crowds of princes and shepherdesses, Jews and gipsies, monks, minstrels, queens, and so forth, began to scream and scurry away, as well they might, at such an unexpected demonstration. The chief afterwards passed it off as a joke, but there were some who thought this an outburst of temper in earnest, and that for a moment the Turk's scalp had been in real danger.

Though Brant, by his abilities, made such a figure in the councils of his nation and the battles of the time, we do not know that he had any right to be, or was, recognised as the leader of his people except on certain occasions; and it is asserted that by birth he belonged to a family not of the highest rank among them. The very fact that there is great uncertainty as to who was his father, shows how far an Indian chief was the son of his own deeds.

The name of this chief suggests another source of influence which became open to the Indian nobles, so to call them, by contact with the white men. When they were able to profit by opportunities of acquiring some lessons of civilisation, they found themselves more in a position both to dominate over and to elevate their fellow-tribesmen. Brant himself was, to some extent, an educated man ; at least, he knew enough to understand the advantages of knowledge. He had been to school with a clergyman, and though charges of cruelty have been brought against him, he was certainly weaned from the mere wanton ferocity of his forefathers. He was even a Freemason, and in that capacity has been known to extend his protection to a brother Mason taken in battle. He translated part of the Bible into the Mohawk language. In fact, he was more of a scholar than most of the white backwoodsmen, and when he pleased, could behave himself like a gentleman and a man of business. Such men, of course, played a very important part in reconciling their race to the inevitable conquest of civilisation.

Contemporary with Brant, a chief still more remarkable for his attainments, if not for his virtues, flourished in the south, and turned his power to excellent account for himself, though not for his people. Earlier in the century, a red-headed Scotch lad, named Lachlan Macgillivray, ran away from home to seek fortune and adventures in America. He found a passage to Charlestown, and was soon engaged to accompany a caravan of traders into the Indian country. His own capital consisted of a shilling and a jack-knife given him by his master. Many a successful Scotchman has started in the world with less ; young Macgillivray began by exchanging the knife with an Indian for a few deerskins, and ended by becoming one of the most prosperous traders in the country. More than this, he married a princess of the Creek nation, a handsome half-breed, whose father had been a French officer.

Their son was the celebrated Alexander Macgillivray, his blood being thus a mixture of French, Scotch, and Indian.

At fourteen this boy was taken to Charlestown and put to school, showing a strong taste for literature, which he afterwards improved under the tuition of a clergyman. For a time, also, he was clerk in a Savannah house, his father intending him to succeed to his own business. But the mother's blood was stronger in him, after all. In early manhood he suddenly threw up books and business, and went back to the Creeks, who invested him with the high rank to which his mother's birth entitled him; then his talents served him so well, that before long he gained complete ascendancy in the nation, under a title which was interpreted as emperor, or 'king of kings.' Yet it is said that he could not speak the language thoroughly, and his tastes must certainly have been in many respects much above those of his 'savage subjects,' as he called them.

Macgillivray also held the rank of colonel in the British service, and of general in those both of Spain and of the United States. But he was not particularly distinguished as a warrior, which leaves us all the more puzzled as to the means by which he exercised his extraordinary influence. His talents were those of his education; he was an adroit diplomatist, with the pen of a skilful writer, and the tongue, it must be confessed, of a cunning liar. Spain, Britain, and the States were all rivals for the dominant position among the southern tribes, and he contrived to be in service of all of them at once, making promises to and taking pay from all, but always keeping a single eye to his own interests. This clever and polite gentleman was, besides, a partner in a large trading concern. When he died, before his old father, who had taken back his wealth to Scotland, the Creek chief left behind him a handsome property, two or three good

houses, sixty negro slaves, three hundred cattle, and many horses.

The great war chief of the Creeks, in Macgillivray's reign, was a French adventurer named Leclerc Milfort. Another prominent character in the politics of the nation, and leader at one time of a rebellion, was an Englishman named Bowles, private soldier and pirate, as well as aspirant to an Indian throne. Unfortunately these white men whom we find rising to power among the Indians, were generally outlaws or semi-savage wanderers, from whom little in the way of elevating influence could be expected, though, by the way, there is one case on record of an English clergyman becoming an Indian chief, but not making a very noble one, if all stories are true. Far more good has been done for the red man by his own native noblemen, the born leaders of the people, when once they had been won over to exchange their arms for tools.

What a change has been brought about in less than a hundred years! The descendants of Brant have long been peacefully settled in the most prosperous part of Ontario. 'Henry Silverheels, Esq.,' lawyer by profession, and president of the Seneca nation by rank, is found capable of carrying on a troublesome correspondence with the United States Commissioners for Indian affairs. Other chiefs have served and commanded in the armies of the white men; one of General Grant's favourite *aides-de-camp* was of Indian birth. The blood of Pocahontas runs in the veins of some of the 'first families' of Virginia. And all over North America, the grandsons of men whose highest delight was the war-whoop and the scalp dance, are found as preachers, teachers, writers, editors, doctors, engineers, farmers, traders, adapting themselves to the new condition of things, and trying to save their kinsmen from the fate that must overtake them if they cannot be schooled to do likewise.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LITTLE TURTLE.



SOME of the observations already made on the political and military state of the Indians, we find well illustrated in the career of Mishikinawkwa (to choose one out of a dozen spellings of his hard name), or the 'Little Turtle,' as the whites called him, who stands, if not in the first, high in the second rank of celebrated chiefs. His father was a chief of the Miamis, a powerful tribe

inhabiting the mixed prairies and woodlands of Indiana, which had early come into contact with the French traders and missionaries. His mother, however, was a Mohegan ; so that, by the common law of Indian descent, he inherited no rank in his father's tribe. Yet by merit he raised himself to be not only a chief of the Miamis, but a leader among the neighbouring tribes, like Pontiac before and the famous Tecumseh after him. But whereas the patriotic notions of these chiefs began and ended in combat, the most remarkable feature in the case of

the Little Turtle is, that after gallantly, and not always unsuccessfully, fighting against the white men, he had the good sense to see that his was a hopeless cause, and to cast in his influence on the side of civilisation. If every Indian leader had followed his example, and if the settlers had always met them in the same friendly spirit that seems to have been shown towards Mishikinaw kwa when once he had laid down his arms, we might have had another tale to tell than that sad one of the ruin of one race along with the rise of the other. Yet we also see from his experience that the power of a famous chief might be too weak to overrule the passions and prejudices of his tribe.

When the independence of the United States had been recognised, it might have been expected that the Indians who fought on the side of King George would also have given up the struggle as hopeless; but it was not so. It was their own independence which the red men were fighting for, and that was all the more in danger now that the American Government no longer had its hands full with the great war. And now that the peace of the frontiers seemed more likely to be secured, new emigrants came flocking by thousands to the West; the disbanded soldiers of the army had to be provided for; in these quieter times, all the restless and combative spirits of young America turned to the backwoods for an outlet; the hunger for rich lands pressed more and more upon the Indian hunting-grounds. Then the British troops continued to hold some of the posts within the new north-west limits of the States, which went far to keep up the agitation among the tribes of that district; while there were many Canadian half-breeds and other lawless adventurers from our side of the border, who did not scruple to join any enterprise where they might have a shot at the Americans. Thus ill feeling was long kept up on all sides, and the fighting between the settlers and the Indians

only became hotter as the latter were driven from the thick forests of Ohio and Kentucky towards the prairies of the West. In short, the war of the revolution may be said to have lasted, in this part of the country, for more than ten years after the older States were at peace.

Regular troops, with artillery, could now be sent into the backwoods; but for a time, the Government, with all the means left free at its disposal, was scarcely able to make head against the Indians so well as had been done by the scattered handfuls of pioneers. These same bold borderers who, almost unsupported, had held their own for years in the rough-and-ready fighting of the West, when formed into drilled militia and put under the command of trained officers, were like Samson with his locks shorn: a smattering of discipline seemed to hinder rather than help their courage, and on more than one occasion their behaviour in the field was, to say the least of it, most unsatisfactory; while, on the other hand, veteran soldiers were apt to be found at a disadvantage in forest warfare. Moreover, a regular army was hampered by the stores and other apparatus of war, which it was necessary to drag about with them through the tangled woods. So we need not be surprised to learn that more than one of the American generals fared no better on the frontier than Braddock and Crawford had done. In the most disastrous of their defeats, the Little Turtle was the commander against them.

During the summer of 1791, General St. Clair, with more than two thousand men, regulars and militia, made a campaign into the Indian country, for the purpose of building a chain of strong forts as a barrier against the tribes of the north-west. His line of march was from the Ohio river northwards towards Lake Michigan. All went well till the end of October, the lovely and serene time of the Indian summer, which found him

near the present borders of Ohio and Indiana. Here three hundred of his militiamen, tired of the restraints of military service, deserted in a body and made for home. The general detached some of his best soldiers to pursue the deserters and keep them from plundering the stores that were coming up in the rear; his force had already been weakened by the garrisons of the newly-built forts left behind as he advanced, so that the army now numbered about fourteen hundred men.

On the third of November they encamped upon a branch of the Wabash. The camp was on high ground, well suited for defence; but so tired were the men by a long march, that St. Clair put off till next day the precaution of fortifying himself by a wall of felled timber, making the same mistake that proved so fatal to our brave fellows at Isandula. So little did he apprehend danger, that he posted his untrustworthy militia in front and on the other side of the stream—another blunder not likely to be repeated, after sad experience, by the survivors of our Zulu war. He is also accused of remissness in sending out scouting parties, who might have informed him that he was encamping in the presence of an Indian army at least equal, if not superior, to his own in numbers. Miamis, Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippeways, Potawattomies, Senecas, and others—they had joined together to strike a blow at the invader; and while the weary white men slept, their chiefs sat smoking in high council, and the warriors, burning for blood, were streaking themselves with fresh war-paint.

In the course of the night there was some skirmishing at the outpost, yet still St. Clair does not appear to have suspected anything serious. The soldiers were on foot, as usual, by day-break. They had just been dismissed from parade, and were going to breakfast, when sharp firing was heard in front. A few minutes afterwards the advanced body of militia came dashing over the river, running back helter-skelter into the

camp, with hundreds of Indians close upon their heels, in the grey light of dawn. This might well have thrown the army into utter confusion, but the soldiers fell into line as quickly as they could and opened fire on the enemy. The Indians, checked for a moment, soon returned, creeping up the ravines on each side of the camp, and pouring in a hot fire both on front and flank. Again and again the troops charged with the bayonet, clearing the ground in front of them for a little ; but, unable to hold their ground, they had always to fall back, and the tide of shouting savages swept in upon them with waves of fire and steel. The officers being specially singled out by unseen marksmen, the ranks became broken up into separate parties, who, bewildered in the echoing din, scarcely knew which way to turn to escape being surrounded by the enemy. The Indians made their way into the tents, scalping the wounded under the hands of the surgeons ; and after great slaughter, they gained the cannon, which had been placed on a knoll in the centre of the army and were the main aim of the attack. Being unfortunately pointed too high, their balls seem to have gone over the heads of the assailants, who from their cover could pick off the artillerymen, till a pile of dead bodies lay beside every useless gun. In such a struggle, veteran soldiers were little better than recruits. On the one side, concert and subordination became more and more hopelessly lost ; on the other, the enemy kept pressing on with resistless force, each tribe acting in its appointed place, according to the plan prearranged by their chiefs and carried out under the general direction of the Little Turtle.

For three hours this *mêlée* went on, and many of St. Clair's men showed a desperate valour, which could not retrieve the fortunes of the day in such adverse circumstances. The surprise had taken them with empty stomachs, and throughout the campaign they had been upon stinted rations—a bad pre-

paration for fighting. It was a frosty morning; the ground was lightly covered with snow, and the soldiers' fingers were so cold that they could scarcely load their guns. Some of them, shrinking to the rear, crowded round the camp fires, and the general had to threaten them with his pistols to drive them back into the fight. St. Clair himself showed great courage, though so crippled by gout as to be unable to mount his horse without assistance. During the action, he could not find a horse to mount: two were shot while the old soldier was in the very act of being hoisted on to them, and he was obliged to hobble painfully on foot from one part of the field to another; yet he exerted himself to rally his men at various points, and headed more than one of the bayonet charges.

At last, almost all the horses were killed, and the cannon had to be abandoned. The best part of the officers and more than half the whole army had fallen, with General Butler, the second in command. There seemed nothing for it but a retreat to save the rest. A charge was ordered upon the right flank of the Indians, who, as usual, gave way for the moment; and by this feint, the army was able to gain the road by which they had come on the day before, and betook themselves to a rapid flight, for such it soon became, in spite of the efforts of the officers to cover the retreat and conduct it in an orderly manner.

St. Clair had at last found an old pack-horse, which he could hardly spur out of a walk. Riding thus helplessly in the rear, nobody regarding his orders, he had the shame of seeing the road strewn with the arms and accoutrements which his troops had flung away in their panic-stricken haste. The Indians pursued only for a few miles, then hurried back to share in the plunder of the camp; but the routed army could not be brought to a stand, till at nightfall they found themselves within the walls of Fort Jefferson, twenty-seven miles from

the battle-field. Even there they felt scarcely safe ; the march was resumed at ten o'clock, and continued all night. The tired and disheartened troops never faced about till they reached Fort Washington on the Ohio.

Such is an outline of this bloody conflict, which bears no other name than St. Clair's defeat. But we may get a better notion of it from an eye-witness, Major Jacob Fowler, who, in 1844, when eighty years old, published his reminiscences of the battle in the *Cincinnati Advertiser*. His account of what passed, not very clear in some parts, is perhaps all the more true to the horror and confusion of the scene. He had been attached to the army as a surveyor, with the rank of a subaltern, but had not cared to part with his trusty rifle for any weapon less serviceable in the woods :—

‘ My stock of bullets becoming pretty low from hunting, as soon as it was daylight that morning, I started for the militia camp to get a ladle for running some more, when I found that the battle had begun, and met the militia running in to the main body of the troops. I hailed one of the Kentuckians, who I found had been disabled in the right wrist by a bullet, asking him if he had balls to spare. He told me to take out his pouch and divide with him. I poured out a double handful and put back what I supposed was the half, and was about to leave him when he said, “ Stop, you had better count them ! ” It was no time for laughing, but I could hardly resist the impulse to laugh, the idea was so ludicrous of counting a handful of bullets, when they were about to be so plenty as to be had for the picking up by those who should be so lucky as to escape with their lives. “ If we get through this day’s scrape, my dear fellow,” said I, “ I will return you twice as many ! ” But I never saw him again, and suppose he shared the fate that befell many a gallant spirit on that day. I owe the bullets, at any rate, at this moment.

‘On returning to the lines, I found the engagement begun. One of Captain Pratt’s men lay near the spot I had left, shot through the belly. I saw an Indian behind a small tree, not twenty steps off, just outside the regular lines. He was loading his piece, squatting down as much as possible to screen himself. I drew sight at his butt and shot him through; he dropped, and as soon as I had fired I retreated into our lines to reload my rifle. Finding the fire had really ceased at this point, I ran to the rear line, where I met Colonel Darke leading his men to a charge. These were of the six months’ levies. I followed with my rifle. The Indians were driven by this movement clear out of sight, and the colonel called a halt and rallied his men, who were about three hundred in number. As an experienced woodman and hunter, I claimed the privilege of suggesting to the colonel that where we stood—there being a pile of trees blown out of root—would form an excellent breastwork, being of length sufficient to protect the whole force, and that we might yet need it; I judged by the shouting and firing that the Indians behind us had closed up the gap we had made in charging, and told the colonel so. “Now, if we return and charge on these Indians on our rear, we shall have them with our backs on us, and shall be able to give a good account of them.” “Lead the way, then,” said he, and rode to the rear to march the whole body forward. We then charged the Indians, but they were so thick we could do nothing with them. In a few minutes they were around us, and we found ourselves alongside of the army baggage and the artillery, which they had been taking possession of. I then took a tree, and after firing twelve or fourteen times, two or three rods being my farthest shot, I discovered that many of those I had struck were not brought down, as I had not sufficient experience to know I must shoot them in the hip to bring them down. As to the regulars, with their muskets and in

their unprotected state, it was little better than firing at random.

‘By this time there were about thirty men of Colonel Darke’s command left standing, the rest being all shot down and lying around us either killed or wounded. I ran to the colonel, who was in the thickest of it, waving his sword to encourage his men, and told him we should all be down in five minutes if we did not charge on them. “Charge them!” said he to the little line that remained, and they did so. Fortunately the army had charged on the other side at the same time, which put the Indians for the moment to flight. I had been partially sheltered by a small tree, but a couple of Indians who had taken a larger one, both fired at me at once, and, feeling the steam of their guns at my belly, I supposed myself cut to pieces. But no harm had been done, and I brought my piece to my side and fired, without aiming, at the one that stood his ground, the fellow being so close to me that I could hardly miss him. I shot him through the hips, and while he was crawling away on all fours, Colonel Darke, who had been dismounted and stood close by me, made at him with his sword and struck his head off. By this time the cock of my rifle-lock had worn loose and gave me much trouble; meeting with an acquaintance from Cincinnati, named M’Lure, who had no gun of his own, but picked up one from a militiaman, I told him my difficulty. “There is a first-rate rifle,” said he, pointing to one at a distance. I ran and got it, having ascertained that my bullets would fit it.

‘Here I met Captain J. S. Gano, who was unarmed, and handing him the rifle I went into battle with, I observed to him that we were defeated, and would have to make our own escape as speedily as possible; that if we got off, we should need the rifles for subsistence in the woods. The battle still raged, and at one spot might be seen a party of soldiers gathered together, having nothing to do but to present mere marks for

the enemy. They appeared stupefied and bewildered with the danger. At another spot the soldiers had broken into the marquees of the officers, eating the breakfast from which those had been called into the battle. It must be remembered that neither officers nor men had eaten anything the whole morning. Some of the men were shot down in the very act of eating. Just where I stood, there were no Indians visible, although their rifle balls were striking all around. At last I saw an Indian break for a tree about forty yards off, behind which he loaded and fired four times, bringing down his man at every fire, and with such quickness as to give me no chance to take sight in the intervals of his firing. At length I got a range of two inches inside his back-bone, and blazed away; down he fell, and I saw no more of him.

'A short time after, I heard the cry given by St. Clair and his adjutant-sergeant to charge to the road, which was accordingly done. I ran across the army to where I had left my relative, Captain Pratt, and told him that the army was broken up and in full retreat. "Don't say so," he replied; "you will discourage my men, and I can't believe it." I persisted a short time, when, finding him obstinate, I said, "If you will rush on your fate, in God's name do it." I then ran off towards the rear of the army, which was making off rapidly. Pratt called after me, saying, "Wait for me!" It was no use to stop, for by this time the savages were in full chase and hardly twenty yards behind me. Being uncommonly active in those days, I soon got from the rear to the front of the troops, although I had great trouble to avoid the bayonets which the men had thrown off in the retreat, with the sharp points towards the pursuers.'

The wounded had to be left on the ground, abandoned to the savage fury of the foe, and there is reason to believe that many of them were cruelly tortured. Fowler describes the

freshly-scalped heads reeking, as with smoke, on the frosty ground; and the Indians who took part in the battle afterwards declared that their arms that day had been weary of tomahawking the white men. The Indians themselves, so far as is known, suffered comparatively little loss. At Christmas a strong force of soldiers visited the field to bury the dead, and bring off the cannon, which the victors, unable to make use of them, had not removed. Though several weeks had passed since the battle, a number of warriors are said to have been surprised in the act of still revelling on the spoils. The woods were found strewn for five miles with skeletons and mutilated bodies. Five hundred skulls were collected in an area of three hundred and fifty yards. Many of the dead men had their mouths filled with earth, a bitter jest upon that greed for land which had been the cause of this butchery.

St. Clair's defeat spread gloom and terror over the frontiers, and throughout the States a loud cry of indignation arose against the unfortunate general. But the leader of the victorious Indians was scarcely better treated by his people. His brother chiefs became jealous of his authority; as usual, the tribes were unable to act long in concert, and their army dispersed without following up its success. Then for three years a desultory and indecisive border war went on, till General Wayne took the field and soon showed himself the very man to deal with such an enemy, though he had not been particularly successful in regular warfare. 'Mad Anthony,' the soldiers called him, in affectionate allusion to his impetuous temper, and the Indians learned to know him as the 'Hurricane.' Yet they also gave him the name of the 'Black Snake,' for with all his dashing courage he was cunning and cautious as an Indian fighter must be. The newspaper writers complained of him as slow in his preparations, but he was quick enough when the time came for action. He drilled his men to load as they ran;

he kept half-Indian scouts riding through the woods to act as eyes for his army ; he never halted for a single night without protecting his position by a breastwork of logs ; then, when once fairly before the enemy, instead of waiting to be attacked, he marched rapidly upon the Indian towns of the Miami, where the tribes had again gathered themselves in force, offering them peace, but clearly meaning that they should deliberate upon his terms at the point of his bayonets.

The Indians, after murdering the bearers of his propositions, fell back upon their usual policy of procrastination. When they saw that he was in earnest and coming upon them in force, they asked for ten days to think and smoke over his offer ; but while they held their long-winded councils, Wayne was steadily advancing with three thousand men. The Little Turtle was not for fighting him, or, if they must fight, he prudently advocated a harassing guerilla warfare, such as the red warriors excelled in, in preference to the risk of a general action. 'We have beaten the enemy twice under separate commanders,' he argued ; 'we cannot expect the same good fortune always to attend us. The Americans are now led by a chief who never sleeps : the night and the day are alike to him ; and during all the time that he has been marching upon our villages, notwithstanding the watchfulness of our young men, we have never been able to surprise him. Think well of it. There is something whispers me it would be prudent to listen to his offers of peace.'

This advice only brought upon him the taunt of cowardice ; but when the opinion of the majority went against him, he accepted their decision against his own judgment, and, though the command appears to have been given to a rival chief, Blue-jacket, fought bravely in the battle which put an end to the Indian wars for many years to come. The infatuated tribes resolved not only to fight at once, but to fight on the de-

fensive, which was not the strong point of their military character.

The Indian army was strongly posted in a wood on the banks of the river, their front defended against cavalry by a swathe of fallen timber, which, as often happens in the American forests, had been blown down by a furious storm. General Wayne advanced cautiously, as yet uncertain whether the enemy would declare for peace or war; but as soon as they opened fire, he took the offensive with a vigour that upset all their calculations. By a bayonet charge, they were at once driven from their covers, and the first line of the infantry following up this advantage, they were in full flight before half of Wayne's men had come into action. Then the cavalry, rushing in from the flanks, cut down the naked warriors with their terrible 'long knives,' and hotly pursued them through the open woodlands, giving them no time to load or rally. The pursuit only ceased under the guns of the British Fort Miami, where it was suspected that the Indian forces had found not only sympathy, but more practical aid; and, in the flush of victory, the American soldiers were within an ace of attacking the fort, and thus bringing on, perhaps, another great war between the two countries.

The bloodshed of this battle at the Fallen Timbers effectually extinguished the bellicose ardour of the north-western Indians, and next year, 1795, the twelve chief hostile tribes entered into the treaty of Greenville, which put an end at last to the war which for twenty years had raged almost without intermission along the frontiers. The life and property of the settlers were now tolerably safe, till the feud of the two races once more burst out into flame at the inspiration of the great chief Tecumseh. The terms agreed to were the same offered by Wayne before his victory—a fact which speaks well for the generosity of the American Government, or which at least

marks its growing sense that the sons of the soil as well as the settlers had rights and wrongs in the matter of clearing the backwoods. The Indians, on this occasion, undertook to retire from another broad belt of rich land ; the valleys of the Miami and the Wabash became free to emigration. For this concession, they received at once twenty thousand dollars' worth of goods, with an annuity of nine thousand dollars to be divided among the tribes. This system of pensioning off such troublesome enemies now came into full force, which, though the Americans meant it in kindness, resulted as much as any other means in bringing the once formidable warriors to dependence and degradation.

The Little Turtle is understood to have opposed the surrender of these lands ; but as soon as the treaty was made, he frankly and sensibly accepted the altered situation of affairs. While most of his brother chiefs submitted with more or less sullenness and suspicion to the predominance of the whites, this one buried the hatchet for good and all, and henceforth appeared as the friend of the conquerors and the advocate of those institutions and ways of life in which he perceived their strength to lie. He had before used his influence to abolish the barbarous customs of Indian war ; he now tried to introduce among his people the arts of peace. He set an example of the first step in civilisation by becoming a farmer himself, and did his best to teach agriculture to his tribe. He also brought the practice of inoculation for smallpox among them, and in other respects showed himself ready to take any useful hint from his white neighbours. Nor did he fail to recognise and fight against the deadliest plague of Indian life ; it was at his request that the legislature of Kentucky forbade the sale of spirits to the Indians—a law often made by many authorities, and almost always broken.

The American Government took pains to foster the evident

taste which Mishikinawka displayed for a higher standard of life and comfort; it would save so much trouble if every chief could be induced to settle down and turn his thoughts to improving property of his own instead of destroying that of his neighbours. So a wooden house was built for this chief, and he was set up as a farmer. The main hindrance to his prospering in this new line of life, was the jealousy of his tribe, who looked askance on these favours of the white men, and by no means entered into their chief's zeal for reform. It was all he could do to preserve any degree of credit among them; the conqueror of St. Clair, like our Duke of Wellington, lost in home politics the popularity he had deserved in war. The first cow he possessed was maliciously killed by night, and Little Turtle was obliged to pretend that he believed it to have died of disease, though he knew very well how this trick had been played him, but could not venture to punish it. In his house he had tea and coffee and butter; but he found it necessary to keep these unpatriotic luxuries for strangers, not daring to indulge in them himself, lest he should be cried down as a traitor to the good old Indian ways. He had European clothes also, which he could not wear unless when away from home; and he was obliged to be always on his guard how he praised the customs of his white friends at the expense of Indian pride and self-satisfaction. We know that the ways of reformers are hard in all countries and ages, but is it so well known that an Indian chief was more the servant of public opinion than an English Prime Minister, who is at least not liable to have his dinner-table criticised by Tom, Dick, and Harry?

With such tastes and aspirations, it is not surprising that the Miami chief liked to get away from home now and then, though he was not able to gratify himself by staying long in the friendly society of the whites. He found excuse to make

several visits to Washington and Philadelphia, to the Quakers of which latter city this converted fire-eater seems to have specially recommended himself, enlisting them as patrons of his civilising efforts. Here he met the French author M. Volney, who informs us that on such occasions he wore a suit of blue broadcloth, with pantaloons, and a round hat like any other respectable citizen. At Philadelphia also he made the acquaintance of another celebrated European, Kosciusko, the Polish patriot, then a lion of the first class among the liberty-loving Americans. These two chiefs might well have regarded each other with singular interest, since they had both played at the same time a similar part on such very different stages, as the brave and beaten champions of unruly independence against selfish covetousness and inevitable change. We learn that Kosciusko made the Indian a present of a handsome pair of pistols, with this speech: 'I have carried and used these in many a hard-fought battle in defence of the oppressed, the weak, and the wronged of my own race, and I now present them to you with this injunction, that with them you shoot dead the first man that ever comes to subjugate you or despoil you of your country.' On the other hand, the Little Turtle, when he had been informed of the fate of Poland, is described as striding up and down in high excitement, waving his pipe tomahawk, and indignantly declaring that this wicked woman, the Czarina, would some day feel the hand of vengeance. But the Turtle's fighting days were over, though occasionally he still had a wrangle with the American Government, mainly, perhaps, as is conjectured, with the view of recovering some of his lost credit with the Indians.

In his old age, it must be confessed, this hero became a somewhat fat, greedy, and prosaic character. With his war-paint washed off, and as he grew familiar in the company of his old enemies, he is said to have exhibited a most jocose and sociable disposition, finding amusement in sly repartees and in telling

amusing anecdotes of the wars where he had once made such a formidable figure. In John Johnston's *Recollections of the last Sixty Years*, we are told he would laugh heartily at his own expense in telling the following story :—

‘A white man, a prisoner for many years in the tribe, had often solicited permission to go on a war party to Kentucky, and had been refused. It was never the practice with the Indians to ask or encourage white prisoners among them to go to war against their own countrymen. This man, however, had so far acquired the confidence of the Indians, and being very importunate to go to war, the Turtle at length consented, and took him on an expedition into Kentucky. As was their practice, they had reconnoitred during the day, and had fixed on a house, recently built and occupied, as the object to be attacked next morning, a little before the dawn of day. The house was surrounded by a clearing, there being much brush and fallen timber on the ground.

‘At the appointed time, the Indians, with the white man, began to move to the attack. At all such times, no talking or noise is to be made. They crawl along the ground on their hands and feet ; all is done by signs from the leader. The white man all the time was striving to be foremost, the Indians beckoning him to keep back. In spite of all their efforts, he would keep foremost ; and having at length got within running distance of the house, he jumped to his feet, and went with all his speed, shouting at the top of his voice, “*Indians! Indians!*” The Turtle and his party had to make a precipitate retreat, losing for ever their white companion, and disappointed in their fancied conquest of the unsuspecting victims of the log cabin. From that day forth, this chief would never trust a white man to accompany him again to war.’

This was not the Turtle's sole experience of the kind ; there is another story of one of his captives, which agrees much

better with the conventional idea of the noble child of nature. A lad named William Wells had been captured, and adopted into his family. For many years he lived among the Indians so contentedly that he did not scruple to fight with them against his own race, and distinguished himself by his prowess in tomahawking St. Clair's unfortunate soldiers. But as the war went on, Wells was either seized with compunction, or perceived himself to be upon the losing side; anyhow, he saw fit to change his allegiance. Then, instead of sneaking off to the settlements, he took leave in a way that speaks well for the honourable sentiments both of himself and of his adopted father. As he was walking one day in the woods with Mishikinawka, he pointed to the sky, and said, 'When the sun reaches the meridian, I leave you for the whites; and whenever you meet me in battle, you must kill me, as I shall try to do by you.'

He was as good as his word, but these two still remained friends after they had thus become enemies. Wells, in his new service, made himself so much feared as well as hated by the Indians, that when he was killed by them at Chicago in 1812, they are said to have eaten his heart and drunk his blood, a compliment they sometimes paid to the most valiant of their foes. But he and the Miami chief proved themselves high-minded warriors who could fight without rancour. When peace was made between their peoples, Captain Wells, as he was now called in Wayne's army, went back to his Indian father and remained intimate with him during the rest of his life.

The manner of the Little Turtle's death was quite as inconsistent as his latter occupation had been with that romantic dignity which we expect from an Indian chief. Among other virtues and vices of a higher way of life, he had acquired a most unheroic love of good living. So this doughty warrior,

this once unsophisticated savage, died of gout, like any British alderman. In his dying hours, however, the old instincts came back upon him, and after he had come to Fort Wayne to be treated, without success, by the army surgeons, he insisted on breathing his last on the turf beneath the open air, where his youth had been spent. He died in 1812, while the war with Tecumseh was going on, having used his influence to restrain his tribe from taking part, this time, against the Americans.



CHAPTER IX.

THE RED MAN'S RELIGION.



WHAT was the religion of the Indians? The first English colonists, moved by strong Protestant feeling, and horrified at the heathen ways of their red neighbours, disposed of the question very simply by setting them down as worshippers of the devil. More charitable students of their character and customs came to maintain that the object of their adoration was no other than a ruined image of the

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; thus such writers as Adair have found in their rude religious ceremonies some resemblance to the feasts of the Jews, have fancied that the guttural exclamations with which they responded to the howls and chants of their pow-wows were the *Hallelujahs* of the Bible story, and have earnestly argued that in the Red Indian race must be recognised the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Some observers have discovered in their religious horizon the mighty forms of a great good and a great evil spirit, warring against

each other for rule over the life of man. Others have seen nothing in their modes of worship but a low and degrading fetishism. And others, having suffered from the brutality of the Indians with whom they had to do, and perceiving no temples or idols among them,¹ have declared that they had no religion at all.

The truth is, that most of these observers, in the early times, were too prejudiced or too ignorant to form a right judgment on this matter, even if they had often had fair opportunities of doing so. The Indian, reserved and suspicious, was hard to be drawn into communicating his deepest thoughts, which his want of writing rendered him unable to define for himself; while his conceptions of the spiritual were wavering and hazy, and his language furnished him with almost no terms to express them. So the missionaries and others who tried to exchange religious ideas with him, commonly learnt little and taught him less. It is only in recent days that the science of comparative mythology, coming to our aid, has given us principles which throw a little light into the state of the savage mind; and we are thus able to form a faint notion of the Indian's thoughts about the unseen world. Such a book as this cannot enter into any deep study of his religion; but it is hoped that even young readers may take an interest in some account of its character and outward manifestations.

Like other savages risen above the infancy of their race, the Indian could not behold the vicissitudes of human existence without asking himself how and why these things were so, and what might be his relation to all the universe as he knew it. The irresistible forces with which he was surrounded, called awe and dread to life within his soul; the succession of day and night, the changing face of the heavens, the rolling seasons,

¹ There were temples among the southern tribes, but not in that part of America which is here throughout spoken of as the backwoods.

all the beauties and terrors of the visible world, and all the joys and pains of his own lot in it, filled his awakening mind with wonder and curiosity. Scarcely had he learned to give names to these things, than he began to think of them as living beings like and yet unlike himself, and to people earth and sky with gigantic shadows having a human will but more than human power to help or hurt him. He would speak to himself of the dawn as a God, of the wind as a spirit, of the earthquake as the work of a demon. His childish imagination would run riot in wild grotesque fancies about these supernatural beings; thus grew up tales, which were distorted reflections of what he saw going on in the world about him, the personages of them suggested by the sun and moon, the winds and clouds, the thunder and lightning, the winter and summer, and other phenomena to which he gave the form and attributes of human beings or of beasts and birds. With these tales soon came to be mixed confused memories of his real or supposed ancestors, seen magnified through the mists of time, like Romulus and Prometheus in the old world, who were fabled as of more than mortal birth, to have taught men the arts of life and the duties of religion, and to be dwelling for ever powerful and glorified in heaven; so that it is always hard to say how much of a nation's mythology is history and how much mere imagination, and especially hard in the case of such a race as the Red Indians, with whom history was a dream of absurdities and impossibilities.

Among the crowd of shadowy beings thus created, one—perhaps the image of some bygone hero, perhaps a poetical impersonation of the light that conquers darkness and gives gladness to the earth, perhaps an unconscious union of both these conceptions—might stand forth for some tribe as their progenitor and guardian spirit, to whom they owed a peculiar duty, and who would exercise a peculiar care over them, against

similar powers that protected neighbour nations. Such a god was the Odin of the Scandinavians, and such, among others, was Michabo, 'the Great Hare' of the Algonquins of North America. But neither Scandinavians nor Indians knew, except in dim, fleeting visions, of the one Almighty Spirit adored by the higher races of mankind, as Father of all things visible and invisible.

'Ye who love the haunts of nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches,
And the rain shower and the snowstorm,
And the rushing of great rivers
Through their palisades of pine trees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries.'

—All such will understand how religious thoughts were first stirred within the dark Indian mind, nor will any despise this faint dawn,

'Who believe that in all ages,
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened.'

The purest saint is but the spiritual descendant of the most ignorant savage. 'Around him was the beauty and motion of life; before him very often the mystery of death, for there were weeping fathers and mothers in these old times over dead little children, and friends stood silent and tearful beside their dead friends in those days as they do in these; and do

you think that a man would sit himself down to frame a wilful, cunning lie about the things that awed him ?'¹

The religion of most Indians came practically to this, that whatever they did not understand was in their eyes *medicine*, endowed with some supernatural power. An English newspaper has been observed to be treasured as containing a charm of peculiar efficacy ; so has a wig, which had been snatched off the head of an officer when his amazed conqueror thought to scalp him. Such an incomprehensible machine as a watch or a clock would not fail to be supposed to have a spirit inside it. Each red man carried about him his own special medicine or fetish, some bird or beast, or a portion of it, which he took to be, as it were, his patron saint ; but for him all things in nature had a spirit which it behoved him to propitiate as often as he had to do with it. Thus, when about to shoot a perilous waterfall, he would be seen to throw into the boiling rapids two yards of scarlet cloth and a brass kettle as an offering to secure his safety. In the same way, when embarking to cross some lake, he would sacrifice a dog or a handful of tobacco to the spirit of the water, who, as he believed, had power to overwhelm his frail canoe with winds and waves. The wanderer of the woods and prairies will sometimes come upon the offerings, displayed on trees or platforms, or hidden in a heap of leaves, which some former travellers have thus solemnly dedicated to the earth or air.

The spirit of living creatures, even after death, had a still stronger hold on his imagination. The hunter who had fearlessly faced a bear, was afraid of what its ghost might do to him when he had killed it. He and his friends would surround the carcase, stroking and kissing its head, blowing tobacco smoke into its nostrils, calling it by endearing names, begging

¹ Clodd's *Childhood of the World*.

a thousand pardons for the hard necessity which hunger had laid upon them to take its life, and doing all they could think of to appease its spirit before they set about greedily devouring its flesh! A like superstition haunted the inhuman crew who had just tortured a poor wretch to death. Then they would raise a hideous clamour, clattering with sticks and kettles, to frighten away from their village the ghost which might well be thought to linger, restless and vengeful, near the scene of such barbarity. And when the medicine man, by his loud and long-winded incantations, was understood to have driven out of a sick man's stomach the spirit of unhealth that had possessed him, his friends might be seen firing their guns at the door of the wigwam to shoot the invisible plague as it took wing!

Above other animals, the serpent, and especially the rattlesnake, is held in veneration by savages. This primeval and world-wide superstition was in full force among the red men, who saw in the tortuous movements of the venomous reptile, and in its sudden deadly spring, a symbol of the lightning flash that for them was the most mighty and mysterious of the forces of nature, while the strange power of fascination that it appears to exert upon its victims bespoke it 'more subtle than any beast of the field.' So they shrank from its path and dreaded to kill it, lest the spirit should incite its powerful relatives to revenge.

When Bartram, the botanist, was travelling among the Indians, he was sent for in haste to drive a rattlesnake out of one of their camps. On arriving at the place, he found the doughty warriors standing irresolute with their weapons in their hands, and the women and children trembling at a safe distance, while the 'revered serpent leisurely traversed their camp, visiting the fireplaces from one to another, picking up fragments of their provisions, and licking their platters.' The

man of science had no fears of the devil in such a shape; he caught up a knot of wood and crushed the serpent's head forthwith. But afterwards some of the Indians came to him, proposing that he should allow himself to be scarified to the extent of drawing blood, by way of penance, which was to appease the manes of the serpent. Mr. Bartram did not see the matter in that light, and the next calamity that happened to the tribe was no doubt put down to his sacrilegious boldness.

Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian brotherhood, owed his life on one occasion to this superstition, as Mr. Brinton tells us in his *Myths of the New World*. The story is a well-known one, but most of its relaters have missed the real significance of it. 'He was visiting a missionary station among the Shawnees in the Wyoming Valley. Recent quarrels with the whites had unusually irritated this unruly folk, and they resolved to make him their first victim. After he had retired to his secluded hut, several of their braves crept upon him, and cautiously lifting the corner of the lodge peered in. The venerable man was seated before a little fire, a volume of the Scriptures on his knees, lost in the perusal of the sacred words. While they gazed, a huge rattlesnake, unnoticed by him, trailed across his feet and rolled itself into a coil in the comfortable warmth of the fire. Immediately the would-be murderers forsook their purpose and noiselessly retired, convinced that this was indeed a man of God.'

It is difficult to understand, and still more to describe, what was the average Indian's conception of spirits. With all his firm faith, he had faint if any idea of them, except in gross and material forms, as may be seen from the care which he took to provide his dead friends with clothes and food for their journey to the spirit-land. Such a religion was less able to raise earth to heaven for him, than to bring down heaven to earth. His gods were beings of like passions with himself,

and of forms such as he saw around him ; he worshipped them because they seemed strong, not because they were holy. The next life was no other than this, without its pains and sorrows. His hope was to reach at last the happy hunting-grounds, where the woods were to swarm with game and the waters with fish, where the earth should pour forth its fruits richly without fear of drought or blight, and where at last perpetual summer should reign for the souls of all brave and true red men. If, indeed, he were cowardly towards his fellow-men or irreverent towards the mysterious Manitou, it might be his miserable lot to wander, lone and helpless, on such a dreary shore as that of a Canadian lake bound in the rigour of winter, or to fall headlong from the narrow and quaking bridge which, in some of these mythological fancies, was the sole passage to the scene of immortality. But where the heart had little or no sense of sin, this idea of punishment was faint. And all the Indian's conceptions of a future state were vague and confused, exercising but little influence on his conduct. Of how many so-called Christians may the same be truly said ! It is not only savages who often owe such moral restraint as they have mainly to the force of custom and the fear of their fellows.

The seat of this Paradise was always towards the setting sun, like the Hesperides of old. Some believed the road to it to be no other than the Milky Way, bright every frosty night with the souls of the departed ; others had the tradition that a wide water must be crossed which rolled between this life and the next ; many placed the home of the Great Spirit beyond the Rocky Mountains, or on some mysterious island in the great lakes. When J. D. Hunter,¹ with a party of Kansas Indians, reached the unknown Pacific Ocean, they were struck with awe by the boundless expanse of dashing and roaring billows, and

¹ This writer, in his memoirs, gives a higher estimate of the Indian religious character than do most authorities ; but their authenticity has been questioned.

fully believed that they had here reached the verge of human life. In silent dread they contemplated the vast and perilous journey which each of them must enter upon sooner or later, and 'looked in vain for the stranded and shattered canoes of those who had done wickedly. We could see none, and we were led to hope that they were few in number.' And all the time that they continued in that unfamiliar country, they maintained a serious and devout frame of mind, as befitted men who felt themselves to be on holy ground.

It might be thought, even by those who lived with the Indians for some time without being intimately acquainted with them, that they had no formal public worship; but the fact was that most of their feasts, dances, and other ceremonies partook of a religious character. Their most absurd and disgusting orgies were acts of faith as much as the burning of heretics in Spain and the revels of Yule-tide in England. When to the uninstructed eye they seemed to be merely gorging at some interminable banquet, they understood themselves to be performing a work of intercession for the life of a sick friend; and when whooping like fiends round the scalps of their slain foes, they were sincerely testifying their gratitude to the powers that, as they believed, had given them the victory. Each tribe observed certain fixed feasts, such as that of the harvest, of the new moon, of the dead; and, upon occasion of any emergency or calamity, they would unite in special rites of prayer, thanksgiving, or humiliation. They had sacred places, too, to which they would make pilgrimages from a great distance, and pay their vows and offerings with a fervency that astonished irreverent white men. Such were the Falls of St. Antony on the Mississippi, and the Great Pipe Stone Quarry where all the fierce tribes washed away their war-paint, and met each other, there at least, as friends and brethren. And any red man might inwardly consecrate for himself some rock, tree, or foun-

tain, to which he would repair for enjoying special communion with the objects of his veneration.

Pious Indians, we learn, were frequently in the habit of offering prayers and thanks, and giving themselves up to devout meditation ; nor was sermonizing unknown. James Smith lived with an old Indian named Tecaughretanego, a man whom he compares to Socrates for his wisdom and goodness among his fellows, and who seems to have been wont to improve such occasions as presented themselves for moral teaching. His exhortations to faith and thankful content made some impression on young Smith, who could not, however, be so much edified by all his religious notions. Here is a specimen of one of this Indian's prayers, which in its simple sincerity is thoroughly characteristic. After purifying himself in a bath, and burning tobacco as a sacrifice, he addressed the spirit of his devotion as follows, if Smith's translation and memory are to be trusted :—

“O Great Being, I thank thee that I have obtained the use of my legs again ; that I am now able to walk about and kill turkeys, etc., without feeling exquisite pain and misery. I know that thou art a hearer and a helper, and therefore I will call upon thee.

“*Oh, ho, ho, ho !*

“Grant that my knees and ankles may be right well, and that I may be able not only to walk, but to run and to jump logs, as I did last fall.

“*Oh, ho, ho, ho !*

“Grant that on this voyage we may frequently kill bears, as they may be crossing the Sciota and Sandusky.

“*Oh, ho, ho, ho !*

“Grant that we may kill plenty of turkeys along the banks, to stew with our fat bear meat.

“*Oh, ho, ho, ho !*

“Grant that rain may come to raise the Ollentangi about two or three feet, that we may cross in safety down to Sciota, without danger of our canoe being wrecked on the rocks. And now, O Great Being, thou knowest how matters stand; thou knowest that I am a great lover of tobacco, and though I know not when I may get any more, I now make a present of the last I have unto thee, as a free burnt-offering; therefore I expect thou wilt hear and grant these requests, and I, thy servant, will return thee thanks and love for thy gifts.”

‘During the whole of this scene, I sat by Tecaughretanego, and as he went through it with the greatest solemnity, I was seriously affected with his prayers. I remained duly composed until he came to the burning of the tobacco, and as I knew that he was a great lover of it, and saw him cast the last of it into the fire, it excited in me a kind of merriment, and I insensibly smiled. Tecaughretanego observed me laughing, which displeased him, and occasioned him to address me in the following manner :—

“Brother, I have somewhat to say to you, and I hope you will not be offended when I tell you of your faults. You know that when you were reading your books in town, I would not let the boys or any one else disturb you; but now, when I was praying, I saw you laughing. I do not think that you look upon praying as a foolish thing; I believe you pray yourself. But perhaps you may think my mode or manner of praying foolish; if so, you ought in a friendly manner to instruct me, and not make sport of sacred things.”’

After this, it is interesting to learn that the old man's faith did not fail to be confirmed by the appearance, in the course of a few days, of the shower of rain which had been the main object of this act of devotion.

For such plain and practical benefits did the Indian make his supplications, or for the ruin and death of his enemies.

What a distance from this to that form of holy words common to Christendom, which, while we pray for mercy, 'doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy'! Little could the red man comprehend the spiritual blessings which we have learned to seek. Yet there was one petition of the Lord's Prayer, into which he might enter with all his heart: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' This was the constant burden of his own litanies, which could not want in earnestness when the barren rocks and frozen plains so often mocked his shivering search after the necessities of life, and for weeks together the scantiest meal seemed a godsend.

Then he, or the priest of his tribe, would have recourse to 'medicine-hunting.' Fasting, praying, and chanting, they worked themselves into a state of mind in which they believed that it would be revealed to them in a dream or vision where they might come upon the traces of bear or of elk. The recipient of such a vision would make haste to draw, on a sheet of bark, the figure of the beast thus indicated, which drawing was supposed to be a magic charm to ensure success; and in the morning he would set out hopefully in the direction given him in his dream. And as often luck and craft came to the aid of these hungry fancies, he would naturally be confirmed in his faith; while he who, after all, died of starvation, was not able to contradict the experience of more fortunate hunters. So medicine-hunting continued in high vogue, and is practised to this day by the still barbarous natives of the West. It is said that the Indians will postpone hunting day after day for want of a favourable dream; no doubt lazy young redskins are frequently dissatisfied with these auspices.

The wisest of the Indians were anything but students of psychology, and could make no distinction between real existences and the phenomena of an excited imagination. This

may be a hard sentence for a young reader : it means that they thought they saw whatever they fancied they saw, as do even some of us who ought to know better. In the following *jebi*, or ghost story, told by Tanner,—who, living almost all his life with the Indians, had become imbued with their superstitions and ways of thought, coloured, most likely, in his case, by some faint memory of the teaching of his childhood,—it will be noticed that he speaks of what seemed to happen in a dream as if it actually did happen, and at one part of his tale leaves it uncertain, as a matter of no great importance, whether he were awake or asleep.

He once ventured to pass the night upon the shore of a beautiful river-head, at which no Indian would encamp, or even land his canoe. It was called 'the place of the two dead men'—two brothers being buried there, one of whom had stabbed the other in a quarrel ; and his companions, horrified at such a crime, had killed the murderer on the spot, and laid them in the same grave. So there was good reason for a superstitious mind to hold it in dread, and reason the more for Tanner, since the unfortunate pair were said to have borne the same totem as himself, and therefore to be of the family of his Indian mother.

'I had heard it said that if any man encamped near their graves, as some had done soon after they were buried, they would be seen to come out of the ground, and either react the quarrel and the murder, or in some other way so annoy and disturb their visitors that they could not sleep. Curiosity was in part my motive, and I wished to be able to tell the Indians that *I* had not only stopped, but slept quietly at a place which they shunned with so much fear and caution.

'The sun was going down as I arrived, and I pushed my little canoe in to the shore, kindled a fire, and after eating my supper, lay down and slept. Very soon I saw the two dead

men come and sit down by my fire opposite me. Their eyes were intently fixed upon me, but they neither smiled nor said anything. I got up and sat opposite them by the fire, and in this situation I awoke. The night was dark and gusty, but I saw no men, nor heard any other sounds than that of the wind in the trees. It is likely I fell asleep again, for I soon saw the same two men, standing below the bank of the river, their heads just rising to the level of the ground I had made my fire on, and looking at me as before. After a few minutes they rose, one after the other, and sat down opposite me; but now they were laughing, and pushing at me with sticks, and using various methods of annoyance. I endeavoured to speak to them, but my voice failed me; I tried to fly, but my feet refused to do their office.

‘Throughout the whole night, I was in a state of agitation and alarm. Among other things which they said to me, one of them told me to look at the top of the little hill which stood near. I did so, and saw a horse fettered, and standing looking at me. “There, my brother,” said the *jebi*, “is a horse which I give you to ride on your journey to-morrow, and as you pass here on your way home, you can call and leave the horse, and spend another night with us.”’

The traveller was relieved when the morning light banished these terrifying visions. But so firmly persuaded was he of their reality, that he began to look about in all seriousness for the promised horse. He ascended the hill, and found, not indeed the steed, but the tracks of one, following which he did, in fact, find and catch a stray horse, which he knew to belong to the trader whom he was on his way to visit, and which he took for the very horse that ‘the *jebi* had given me.’ The owner in the flesh, however, would no doubt object to its being taken back to the ghost who had so liberally made a present of it, and Tanner took very good care never to accept

the invitation of the fratricides to spend another night with them, that one night having too firmly established his dread of the mysterious powers of dreamland.

Dreams filled a most important place in Indian life. They were looked on as an infallible oracle, and their directions and hints were followed in all concerns with amazing, and often ludicrous credulity. Obedience to them was a high religious duty. It is scarcely to be believed what strange things would be done at the supposed bidding of a mysterious revelation, which was nothing more, probably, than a fit of indigestion. The bloodthirsty brave would sometimes leave the war-path, and sneak harmlessly home, if his nightmares so advised him. Charlevoix tells us of an Indian who dreamed that he had a finger cut off, and when he awoke, did not hesitate to mutilate himself thus in real earnest, that his dream might not be contradicted. Another devout warrior dreamed that he was taken prisoner and tortured by his enemies. He consulted the pow-wows of the tribe as to how this prediction could best be fulfilled, and, by their sage advice, actually let himself be tied up and burned in several places. A band of warriors, usually careless enough on this head, set a watch on their nightly camp, because some old woman dreamed they should do so, though no enemy was suspected to be in the neighbourhood.

This superstition led to all kinds of folly and knavery. In some tribes, when the white men first knew them, a most extraordinary custom was practised, called the Feast of Dreams. This was an orgy of madness, to which almost the whole tribe would give themselves up for weeks together, though a few of the more sensible took themselves out of the way on such occasions. Night after night, the whole village would be turned into a Bedlam broken loose. Disguising themselves with masks and other unusually hideous bedizenments, the frenzied savages would rush from wigwam to wigwam, howling and screaming,

breaking and upsetting everything that came in their way, throwing firebrands recklessly about, striking all they met, and not unfrequently showing so much method in their madness as to murder any one against whom they had a grudge; for it was a time of general licence, in which no one durst complain of whatever might take place. This was only a prelude to the real work of the feast. Each of the performers ran to his neighbours in turn, shouting out that he had dreamed of something which must be given him forthwith, but only hinting in some enigmatical word, or through the devices painted on his body, what the thing was. Every one tried to oblige the other's request, offering him at a guess, a hatchet, a kettle, a collar of wampum, a pipe, till at last the desired present was hit upon, and the raving beggars could go joyfully home, giving back all the other articles which they had received. These wild doings, which are compared by the Jesuits who saw them to the Carnival of their own country and the Bacchanalian revels of ancient times, seem to have been undertaken at the bidding of the pow-wows—of whom more anon—to cure some sickness, or to rid the village of evil spirits.

We cannot confidently say how far the madness which dictated such a scene was assumed and how far genuine; but the Indians would ask no such question, for, like other savage nations, they held all insane states of mind in the highest reverence, and took a lunatic for a prophet as long as he had wits enough to delude them with furious howls and horrible contortions. The dream feasts were probably the work of a hysterical epidemic such as is not unknown in the religious history of Europe. The result of them was sometimes the loss of several lives or the destruction of a whole village.

No good Indian could directly refuse whatever was asked on the warrant of a dream. A man had only to dream that anything belonging to his neighbour should be his, and it was his,

unless the owner could find a manner of explaining away the inconvenient vision by some more plausible interpretation. Lafitau mentions a case in which a prisoner's life had been spared, to the great discontent of a certain cruel warrior, who, not being able to prevail by his arguments in the council of the tribe, took to his bed and dreamed with great distinctness, first, that he had eaten human flesh, and soon afterwards, that this flesh was that of the captive to whom he grudged life. His more humane tribesmen did their best to escape the inference which he sought to draw; they made little mannikins of paste and baked them under the ashes, but these images of his victim could not set the dreamer's soul at rest. He insisted so much on the enormous crime of allowing this oracle to be unfulfilled, that, his dreams remaining obstinate, there was nothing for it but to knock the poor prisoner on the head! It was also not unusual for an ambitious spirit to dream of being appointed to some important office in the tribe, and it seems that he would be straightway promoted accordingly, without any question of this form of election.

No doubt such dreamers would generally have the art to dream within reason; but it is plain that a cunning and covetous Indian had a good chance of dreaming to some purpose. So Sir William Johnson found, when, sitting in council with a party of Mohawks, the head chief told him he had dreamed that Sir William made him a present of the fine laced coat he was wearing. This experienced Indian agent was far too well acquainted with their ways to neglect such a hint; he at once delighted the chief by putting the coat upon his naked limbs. But the baronet, half a Scotchman and half an Irishman by birth, showed himself in the end 'too far north' even for an Indian. At the next council, he informed the same chief that he was not given to dreaming, but that since their last meeting he had dreamt a very surprising dream, to the

effect that his friend with the coat had made him a present of a certain tract of about five hundred acres of the most valuable land along the Mohawk river. The Indian was somewhat aback, and saw that he was caught in a trap. He and his fellow-chiefs gave Sir William the land, but he declared that he would never dream with this white man again.

When dreams failed him, the Indian would also put trust in vows, not unfrequently of a most extravagant and inconsiderate character. Horrible penances they sometimes undertook to inflict on themselves if allowed to make a successful expedition or attain some other object of desire. Occasionally they found it quite impossible to carry out the obligations into which they had thus rashly entered; as, for instance, when a hunter vowed to carry home the paw of the first bear he should kill, without eating a morsel on the way, and then did not kill a bear till he was hundreds of miles from home! In such a case, however, it was generally possible to negotiate a dispensation through the medicine man or priest, who, like the agents of other forms of superstition, was empowered to accommodate matters to uneasy consciences that could afford to pay for such indulgence. But we read of a red-skinned Jephthah who, that he might obtain success in war, vowed to put to death the first living being he might meet on his return home, and carried out his terrible oath, though the victim whom chance threw in his way to be murdered and scalped in the darkness was no other than his own mother!¹

For the most striking proof of the length to which superstition and credulity would carry these people, let us go back a century or so to the records of the French colony in Canada. The story now to be told is one exhibiting the Indians in a very undignified light—one, indeed, which might be thought a mere joke if its truth were not certified by the grave and pious

¹ Edwin James' *Narrative of Long's Expedition*, i. 122.

persons concerned in this extraordinary affair; but after all we have seen of the red men's character, we need not be surprised at the trick that we are going to see played upon them.

On the banks of Lake Onondago, in the heart of the Iroquois country, was settled a little colony of some fifty Frenchmen, headed by devoted Jesuit fathers who never shrank from risking their lives to rescue the Indians from heathendom. Every man who joined that colony knew that he took his life in his hand, for the Indians of the Six Nations and the struggling French settlements along the St. Lawrence were almost constantly at war. It was not two years since they had come there, in 1656, on the invitation of the Onondago tribe. At first all had gone well. They had been received with feasts and demonstrations of friendliness; they had been allowed to build themselves a fortified house; the missionaries were listened to, though their preaching seemed to make little real impression on the Indian character.

But now the Frenchmen began to suspect that their new settlement would not long be left in peace. The Indians still feigned friendship, yet there was reason to distrust their fickle and treacherous purposes. A fresh outbreak of hostilities was daily expected, in which case it would fare ill with the little band of white men at Lake Onondago, whose position was little better than that of hostages in the hands of the enemy. They might well feel uneasy; and their suspicions were confirmed by the confession of a converted Indian, who informed them that on a certain day they were to be surprised, overpowered, and carried to Canada to be tortured before the walls of Montreal and Quebec, as a means of persuading their countrymen to surrender.

Being thus warned in good time, they took measures to escape from the country. Notice was sent to the outlying parties; all the Frenchmen were gathered together in their

fort. Secretly, in the garret, they worked at two flat-bottomed boats to hold fifteen men apiece. Besides, they had eight canoes. But how were they to get away without being discovered and attacked by overwhelming numbers? The Indians, encamped all round their abode, were keeping a close watch upon them, and were in the habit of going in and out of the mission-house as if it were a public place of entertainment. Not a man of them could steal into the woods unseen, much less could fifty depart with all their baggage. It was necessary to meet cunning with cunning; and while pretending to be quite at ease, the Jesuits carried out a most extraordinary plan for eluding the vigilance of their dangerous neighbours.

There was a young Frenchman, who had been adopted by an Indian chief and become familiar with their language and customs, but who was willing to act in concert with his countrymen. He now announced that it had been revealed to him in a dream that he was in danger of being killed by an evil spirit. To appease it, he invited the Indians to partake of a 'medicine' feast, at which every guest was bound to eat as much food as might be placed before him. These *gorging parties* were a common feature of Indian life, and it was a point of honour not to shrink from the most disgusting and often injurious gluttony; no warrior could refuse to oblige his comrade by taking part in the ceremony, on which, as they believed, his life depended. So preparations were duly made for the enormous banquet. The Jesuits, who had before denounced this custom, now saw fit to encourage it. Towards the provisions for the occasion, they gave the hogs which they had brought with them to stock the country, and other supplies from their own stores. The scheme, of course, was to bring the whole tribe into such a state of repletion that they would be perfectly helpless and stupid. The Indians fell into it blindly, and were effectually deceived while congratulating themselves on their

cleverness in deceiving their intended victims, whom they proposed to feast with one day and feast upon the next.

The evening appointed for the festival arrived, and every kettle in the camp was called into use. Great fires and torches of birch, bark, and pine wood lit up the scene. The dusky crowd came together in keen anticipation of pleasure after their own heart. To animate them there was no lack of music, savage and other; drums, trumpets, and flutes made the woods resound with discordant din. The Frenchmen pretended to enter into the excitement, gaiety no doubt coming natural to them even at such an anxious time. They gave presents, they fraternized with the greasy warriors, they danced in the Indian fashion, and the red men, not to be behind-hand in civility, cut clumsy capers in imitation of the French dances. We may fancy the roars of laughter, the shrieks, the chattering, the rough jests. The sly young host played his part well, labouring to make the company feel at home. The rude cookery was accomplished; the huge portions were ladled out into wooden bowls; the greedy guests fell to on stews of flesh, fish, and corn. The music clattered on. All was jollity, enjoyment, and, above all, noise, under favour of which, the boats and baggage of the mission were being quietly carried down to the side of the lake by some of the Frenchmen, while others remained among the feasters, encouraging them to stuff themselves like men in the sacred cause which they had undertaken.

The viands swiftly disappeared, till even the red-skinned gluttons, accustomed as they were to make up for their long privations by large feeding, began to flag in the task of consumption. But an English boy would sooner refuse plum-pudding on Christmas day, than an Indian could with any sense of propriety refuse to go on eating at such a banquet, so long as victuals remained, or the entertainer chose to declare that his demoniacal enemy was still unappeased. They had

gorged themselves to satiety, to discomfort, to positive pain ; it seemed that nature could bear no more. They besought their host to spare them, to have pity ! ' And am I to die, then ? ' he cried indignantly ; and at the call of duty, his friends struggled to cram themselves still further. To oblige him, they would eat till they burst, or till they could no longer raise their fingers to their mouths.

At last, the young Frenchman—who, according to the etiquette of such occasions, had been fasting all through—proclaimed that the work was done, thanked his kind friends, and released them from further service. Most of them, by this time, were utterly incapable of moving. The man whose life they considered themselves to have saved, proved his gratitude by playing softly to them on a guitar, or some such instrument, and under the soothing strains the whole band was soon snoring or stupified. By this time all was ready at the lake side. The Frenchmen had been stealing away one by one. The last of them now followed, without taking leave of their false friends. It was about midnight when the little fleet pushed off, and made for the Oswego river, which was to bear them towards the nearest outpost of civilisation.

Their dangers were by no means passed. It was a cold spring night ; a film of ice was forming over the dark bosom of the lake, through which the foremost boat had to push its way, the rest following in a string along the passage thus opened. If the ice grew too firm to break through, yet not firm enough to walk on, it would be to little purpose that they had escaped the fires of the Iroquois. Then, the outlet gained, there were before them twenty leagues of a stream, abounding in rapids, and shut in on either side by rocks and dense forests, every reach of which was a natural fortress for any enemies who might pursue them. A dozen men, armed only with bows, could have easily wrought havoc among the

unprotected crews. At one place they had to make a portage, which took four hours. But a night and a day's hard work brought them safely to Lake Ontario, and in a few days more they reached Montreal, with the loss of only three men drowned in the rapids of the St. Lawrence.

On the morning after their departure, the Indians awoke, probably not very early, heavy and dull and out of sorts. They were somewhat surprised not to be summoned by the Jesuits to prayers, as usual, still more when they found that none of the Frenchmen were stirring. It is said that figures stuffed with straw had been placed in the attitude of sentinels round the houses. At length the Indians, growing suspicious of this stillness, entered and found the place empty. Now they were lost in wonder. How could the 'black robes' and their comrades have got away? They were not known to possess boats enough, and, moreover, the lake was seen to be frozen over. Snow had fallen through the night, but there were no tell-tale footsteps on its virgin surface. The simple Indians were forced to conclude with awe that the white men must have all flown away; and this belief prevented them from pursuit, even if they had been inclined for much exertion after the orgy of the night before.

We shall be going over much the same ground when we come to our chapter on the Medicine Men; meanwhile, it would be too long and tedious to describe all the sacred customs and observances of the Indians which might be collected from travellers' tales—the omens which they dreaded; the charms in which they trusted; the strange amulets, such as curiously-shaped stones, stuffed birds, pieces of skin or horn, which passed current among them for fragments of divinity; the little dolls of clay or rags which, like Laban's images, might often be found among the treasures of a wigwam; their sacred number,

four, suggested by the main points of the compass ; the brutal indecencies and cruelties which were bound up with their idea of religion : in all these superstitions the Indian's was much like other savage minds at a similar stage of development.

To change such a race to Christians was a labour like spinning a rope of sand. Never has the task of conversion been so patiently and bravely undertaken. First and foremost in the field were the Jesuit fathers, the best of the Jesuits and the most undaunted of the missionaries. Their zeal was worthy of all success, and they may be considered to have taken the best way of commanding it, by bringing the doctrines of Christianity as near as possible to the level of Indian capabilities. Forcing themselves as pastors upon unwilling flocks, they toiled in company with the roaming Indians through woods and deserts, sharing all their privations and more, braving daily a death of murder or unspeakable torture, and enduring a life of cold and hunger, of filth and toil, of scorn and suspicion, from those for whose good they had given up ease, wealth, study, the shores of their native land, and the society of their fellow-countrymen. They must have been men of no common mould who thus went out alone, or at most two by two, amidst thousands of fierce heathen, to war with words of peace against ages of brutal ignorance. It could only have been a sincere faith that kept them to such a crusade in spite of all discouragements. But how many such men left their bones in the western solitudes, as it seemed, with no harvest of success ! 'Nothing is more difficult than the conversion of these Indians,' says one missionary ; but the burden of another is : 'It is easier to make a convert than to keep him.'

The first step, indeed, was often the easiest. The Indians were excellent listeners ; they had a taste of their own for harangues, the longer the better, and it was a high point of

politeness with them to show no sign of disagreement with whatever might be said ; so their stolid and silent attention often deceived preachers accustomed to a restless congregation of soldiers and not too devout adventurers. Nor were the Indians disposed to argue ; they would generally admit that the white man's religion might be good for him, but that seemed no reason why they should change the gods of their ancestors. Then there was the difficulty of conveying to them ideas wholly outside of their limits of thought ; and when the earnest missionary imagined from their demeanour that they were in a fair way to be convinced of his doctrines, it would turn out that they had scarcely understood a single word of what he had been saying, as in the well-known case of the Indian who, after hearing the story of the fall of Adam fully expounded, was found to have gathered, as his version of the matter, that it was a bad thing to eat apples, because they should rather be made into cider ! The very names of spiritual blessings were foreign to their tongue ; and teachings of love and mercy found in the Indian heart scant soil to root themselves. The warriors had no desire to go to a heaven where they were not to hunt, or fight, or make feasts and dances, where also they would have to meet in peace with their hated enemies ; and that poor Indian was not alone in his way of thinking, who asked if there would be any tobacco in the Christian paradise, and hearing what his teacher had to say on this important question, declined to have anything more to do with such a religion.

At first the Jesuit fathers, who were not to be denied in taking up their quarters with some Indian band, would probably find no turn of their office to do but baptizing a child now and then on the sly, lest the parents should think they were bewitching it. Time, however, and patience, and the earnest and evident harmlessness of their purpose, joined with

something of the wily art of their order, would not fail to make an opening for them in the denseness of native superstition. In the early days, indeed, when converts received guns as well as sacraments, candidates would soon be found to come forward for conversion. But if the priests had contrived to slip the yoke of their Church ever so gently on the Indian neck, it was worn both loosely and uneasily, and they were fain to coax as much as to command the consciences of their catechumens.

Without wholly giving up their own customs, the Indians might be brought to attend the bark chapels erected in the woods, and to stare with a certain awe at the ecclesiastical apparatus which the Jesuits took good care to provide—ornaments of tinsel and gay frippery, pictures and banners, candles made of bay-berries burning at the altar, before which a choir of tawny urchins, duly arrayed in cassock and surplice, had been laboriously trained to sing hymns in honour of the Virgin. But in the eyes of the grown-up people this was only changing their old *medicine* for a new one, which must be judged not by principles but results. When the hunting prospered, the mass got the credit of it; but if the rain-clouds kept off, the priest was like to be knocked on the head as a malignant sorcerer. The cross could be raised above the village so long as it availed to frighten away the Mohawks or the Kickapoos, but should smallpox break out, the blame seemed to lie on the holy water. It was long before the Catholic faith could obtain any firmly pre-eminent rank over other ways of commerce with the unseen; and as often as the missionary turned his back, like Moses of old, his congregation began to relapse into all the abominations of heathenism.

So hard was it to introduce a skin-deep Christianity among the Indians; but when the teacher tried to rise above the outward forms of religion, his true despair began, and his rebukes

and instructions might well seem wasted on the winds. A few of the flock allowed themselves to be worked up into fits of enthusiastic piety of a very doubtful kind, which yet encouraged the Jesuits by some remarkable exhibitions of their favourite ascetic virtues; to fast and suffer penance, and see visions, came somewhat natural to a red-skinned saint. Fewer still exhibited, as by a very miracle, some practical fruits of a sober and sincere faith. But the zeal of most of these Christian tyros was little more according to knowledge, or consistent with the spirit of the gospel, than the downright ignorance and obstinacy of unbelievers. The Catholic converts who objected to their captives being baptized at the fiery stake, because they found it most unnatural to help an enemy out of hell, showed themselves no less apt disciples than those who fought rancorously against the English under a hazy impression that this was the people which had crucified their Saviour at London. It was easy for an Indian brave to be a Christian when taking scalps was the duty before him, but seldom otherwise.

All the missionaries were obliged to recognise with sorrow, that it was the nature of the Indian that was at fault; that his heart must be cleared from its wild jungle of savage instincts, hatreds, and superstitions; and that a certain breaking up of his inveterate habits and ways of thought must take place before a fit foundation could be laid for the white man's religion, even in its lowest form. And, had the disposition of the red men been the most gracious in the world, the work of humanizing them must still have proved a very task of Penelope, since whatever might be wrought by the persevering exertions of pious missionaries, was in danger of being undone at once by the bad example of that degraded and licentious class of white adventurers who never failed to follow where saints and martyrs had led the way. The first work of a mission,

slight as it was, often appeared the most wholesome ; and fire water was always the devil's antidote to the water of baptism.

As the Catholics took the first, so also they for long had the widest field for missionary labour, though the Quakers and Moravians might be considered to have worked with more success, judging their work by quality rather than quantity, had not its early promise been blighted by the vile greed and hatred of their countrymen ; a fair chance was denied them of exhibiting the winsomeness of their belief. But the same story must be told of all. In the middle of last century, when so much blood and toil had been spent on the work of conversion during more than a hundred years, the only visible results were a few dwindling bands of tamed Indians, living under the protection of the whites, and no more like their spirited ancestors than a canary in a cage is like a hawk on the wing. A few tribes might allow Christian worship to be performed among them, but to the vast mass, in all practical points, the gospel appeared to have been preached in vain.

Yet it was not so. The Indian character had insensibly been leavened by contact with the faith and civilisation which it so absolutely rejected. While the red men had lost some of their simple native virtues, and acquired too many of the vices of the conquering race, they had also abandoned to some extent the most brutal practices of old days, and their grosser forms of superstition began to vanish away before the few rays of light which, in spite of themselves, were penetrating the darkness of their mind. The Indians with whom the backwoodsmen of Ohio and Kentucky had to do, were cruel and ignorant enough, but they were not so cruel and ignorant as those among whom the Jesuit fathers broke the ground. From the white men, not a few of them learned to shape their nebulous fancies of good and evil spirits into some cloudy form of a Great Spirit ruling over heaven and earth, and thus

prepared their hearts to receive the new commandment of a faith that breathes peace on earth and goodwill towards men. If ever that work be wrought in them, and, as some still hope against all discouragement, the poor Indian shall take his place among the nations of the earth, unblighted by the curse of heathen barbarism, it will surely be remembered that the first missionaries of the cross, with all their errors and shortcomings, were, in toils, and sufferings, and earnestness, and fearlessness, the noblest heroes of the backwoods. ¹

¹ Before the days of comparative mythology, amateur ethnologists were much in the way of trying to connect the red men with the Jews, from observation of ceremonies and customs common to many races at a certain stage of development. It is strange if no attempt have been made to trace back the Indians rather to our own forefathers. Much of what Tacitus says about the Germans would apply as well to the American backwoods, as when he points out the contradictory character of men at once loving idleness and hating quiet, or describes the Teutonic tribesmen coming late to a council to attest their independence. *Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt* might have been written of Red Indians; so too. *Pigrum imo et iners videtur sudore acquirere quod possis sanguine parare.*



CHAPTER X.

THE 'MEDICINE MEN.'



WHEREVER superstition has spread her dark and baneful shade, there has been found flourishing beneath it, amid a thick fungus crop of foul, degrading observances, a class of men who, acting partly from disordered enthusiasm and partly on base self-interest, a superior compound of the impostor and dupe, sometimes more credulous but oftener more

cunning than the ordinary minds around them, have sought profit and honour in pretending to a closer intercourse with the divine, and working upon the fears and follies of their fellow-men. Such ministers of religion were found among every Indian tribe, in the men to whom the first settlers of Virginia and New England gave the name of *pow-wows*. Their influence was always great and seldom good. Whatever we may think of the red man's childish faith, we must agree with Mr. Schoolcraft that the scenes and customs in which his

priests form the leading figures, afford us 'the darkest and gloomiest picture of Indian life.'

These pow-wows, priests, prophets, sorcerers, magicians, wizards, jugglers, enchanters, for by all these and other names have they been called, were usually members of a sacred guild, with its due mysteries, mummeries, and rites of initiation. We have already seen that a certain kind of dream was looked on as a vocation to the office; and there can be little doubt that a youth who felt himself conscious of talents that way, or who had been marked out by the fraternity as a likely recruit for their profession, would not fail to dream whatever dreams were necessary. Yet it need not be supposed that the candidate always or often began as an impostor, for it is the curse of grovelling fanaticism first to fascinate and then to strangle or envenom the loftiest aspirations of human nature. It would be time enough for the Indian priest to deceive others when he had learned thoroughly the lesson of self-deception: and only when he found that the envy and malice of his own heart were the evil spirits most present to him, might he think of striving, by the arts of quackery and knavery, to outdo his rivals in the trade. They seem to have been divided into different orders, according to their functions and qualifications; but we, not being thoroughly informed as to the ranks and regulations of this forest hierarchy, may regard them as one body and call them by their most common name of 'medicine men,' which they received among the whites, because outsiders their most frequent employment appeared to be with the sick.

The 'faculty' among the Indians professed to practise, in much the same manner, upon both the body and the soul; but it is not to be understood that the tribes had no use of real medicine. They were, indeed, rather too fond of dabbling in drugs, which were naturally less necessary to them in a state

where rude health was the rule and disease the exception. Deformed and sickly members of the community were bound to be rare. Their way of life was such as to weed out the delicate constitutions in youth; and the hardy warrior or hunter could not live at all without keeping his body in such a condition that the healing power of nature alone would help him against most ailments but that incurable one of old age. Very old men were less common, when they had to run a lifelong gauntlet of dangers and hardships; but women often enjoyed a most patriarchal period of existence. Father Lafitau mentions one who was a great-great-grandmother; and this venerable lady was a mere chicken to another in the same tribe, whom the oldest inhabitant could not remember as being otherwise than old, but who still survived in a condition little better than that of a slightly animated mummy.

Practice and necessity, the mother of invention, taught the Indians how to deal with such injuries as they were most subject to; and their surgery was remarkably successful on so sound a skin. Educated surgeons were often astonished at the quickness with which a broken bone would set under the care of a practitioner who had studied anatomy only with the tomahawk and scalping knife; and horrible wounds, which to white men appeared utterly hopeless, would heal up with a readiness that put their pharmacopœias to shame. Ligatures, poultices of bark or of chewed leaves, means of raising a blister and astringent juices for stopping the flow of blood, were all of familiar use to men who might any day of their lives have an artery cut open or a ball lodged in the flesh. The chief secret of their cure of wounds lay in wrapping up the part so as to exclude the air, and applying to it healing decoctions of certain plants; and what is this in principle but the antiseptic treatment of the most advanced modern surgeons? The native

materia medica was also strong in the department of antidotes for snake-bites.

Till the blessings and curses of civilisation were introduced among the Indians, the diseases known to them were chiefly of an acute and inflammatory kind, such as fevers, pleurisy, and rheumatism. In treating these they availed themselves of herbs, roots, barks, and other appliances, which experience seemed to have proved useful in each particular case. Some of these remedies were probably harmless; others were active purgatives and emetics, which stood in high favour and repute when administered in such strong doses as almost to exhaust the patient. Ignorant people are always apt to judge thus of medicines by the violence of their effects, as witness Captain Burnaby's oriental chief and the box of Cockle's pills which so painfully extorted his admiration; indeed, there are many among ourselves, not a whit wiser, who have no faith in any process of curing which does not include a certain amount of doctor's stuff, the nastier and more drastic the better.

In most wigwams there would be found an old man or woman skilled in the collection and preparation of such simples, and each family had its 'medicine bag' containing charms and other medical resources. Perhaps in the village there would be some person who had gained special credit for the cures wrought under his care, whose services would be in demand accordingly. These homely physicians would do their best with not more pretence at mystery than is shown in our Latin prescriptions; it appears that, like some other medical men we have heard of, they were given to administering roots and barks in powders, mixed with other substances to conceal their true character, and would make a great point of not letting the patient know what he was taking; and so far there was little to find fault with.

Both to make and to keep themselves well, the Indians chiefly

depended on a process like that which of late years has come into extensive use among ourselves under the name of the Turkish bath. They were much given to cold bathing, and the vapour bath or sweating house was in constant use with them not only as a remedy for sickness, but as a luxury in idleness, a refreshment after fatigue, a religious purification, and in fact upon all ceremonial occasions. They would go naked into a low round lodge, closely covered with mats and skins. Red-hot stones being brought inside, water was thrown on them till the whole enclosure would be filled with steam, and the occupants began to be gently boiled. If half a dozen of them were keeping company in the bath, they might amuse themselves by singing, each his own song, with separate words and air, the result of which, however discordant to the musical ear, was to work them up to the due point of heat and moisture after remaining a very short time in the stifling atmosphere. Sometimes the patient lay on a little frame of cross bars and was steamed from beneath. Then, when he had had enough of it, he would rush out streaming with perspiration, and plunge into cold water or roll his body in the snow.

This sudden change from extreme heat to cold would, according to our grandmothers, be sheer madness. But the shock really seems to do no harm to a healthy body, and the pores are closed so as to prevent catching cold; while the free action of the skin that has taken place is of the highest value in purifying and strengthening the system, for it is quite a mistake to suppose that we are any weaker for getting rid of what is thus thrown off. The Indians sought relief from this bath in almost all cases, and generally, it would appear, with excellent effect. In some ailments, however, it is said to have proved most dangerous. When the smallpox made havoc among them, they tried to sweat out the virus; but the after plunge into cold water drove the fever suddenly inwards, and

the poor creatures died in hundreds and thousands. The Mandans, the tribe to whom Catlin gave his chief attention, have in our own day been exterminated by an outbreak of smallpox; and it is probable that other tribes shared the same sweeping fate before knowing anything of the white man but the terrible pest with which his first contact had infected them.

The Indians took kindly to the drugs introduced by Europeans, at a time when civilised medical practice was only rather more enlightened than their own. They had great belief in remedies which were novel and powerful, and were so particularly fond of the lancet that they often requested to be bled both in sickness and in health; scarifying the skin had been a common operation among themselves. The early missionaries did not fail to try this road to their affections, and by a little knowledge of physic were often able to effect cures which won confidence for themselves, and threw discredit upon their inveterate opponents the conjurors. This was a dangerous experiment, however; for if any disease broke out which proved beyond their aid, the native doctors would be sure to turn the tables on them by setting every death down to the malignant influence of their 'medicine;' and the amateur physician, who sought to do nothing but good, ran the risk of losing his own life to save his patients.

It was when mortal skill and care could do no more for the sufferer, and he seemed at the point of death, that the medicine man proper was called in to exhibit his supernatural agencies. The first thing he did would be to arrange about his fee, for which anything in reason would not fail to be forthcoming from the affectionate solicitude of the relatives. Being satisfied on this head, he would begin by erecting his medicine lodge, open at the top for free communication with the spirits

of the air and the study of such auguries as might be afforded by the wind, the clouds, and the flight of birds. Such a sanctum was indispensable for preparing the mysteries, and for consultation both with his professional brethren and his familiar manitous.

When all was ready, the great doctor issued forth as hideous as paint, feathers, horns, tails, and other grotesque bedizements could make him. The more fearful and fantastic his array, the more credit was given to his powers; a Highland piper has been taken by the Indians for a very great medicine man. A highly sacred costume was formed by smearing the body with gum or resin, then covering it with down, which perhaps suggested to American mobs their fiendish punishment of tar and feathers. Or the holy man might be fearfully disguised in the skin of his manitou, bear, buffalo, or wolf, with the grinning head for a mask. As his instruments, he carried a rattle, a drum, the medicine bag containing his charms, and other little matters which were not to be shown to the public till the time came. If a practitioner of renown, he might be attended by several assistant members of this college of diabolic apothecaries, and he was sure to be followed to the sick man's wigwam by a train of idle spectators, full of reverent curiosity to catch what glimpse they could of the proceedings from the outside, while the relatives and intimate friends were allowed to crowd the wigwam to suffocation.

Arrived with all his tag, rag, and bobtail at the scene of operations, the medicine man would, for the look of the thing, ask a few questions on the nature of the disease. But his was not an art that depended much on accurate observation of symptoms; and presently he would address himself with all his might to drumming, dancing, howling, and contorting his limbs till his body was covered with sweat and he foamed at the mouth, and his eyes seemed starting out of the socket; or

he would set to blowing, rubbing, stroking, and thumping the patient, all the while whispering in his ear, or muttering in an unintelligible jargon, and looking a great deal wiser than any ordinary mortal could possibly be. Perhaps the poor fellow, on whose behalf so much trouble was taken, required nothing so much as rest; but not so thought his friends, who believed that all this din could not fail to frighten the disease, and joined lustily in the yelling chorus, or at least beat time with sticks or fists on the bark wall, by way of lending a hand in the struggle which they understood to be going on between the spirits of life and death.

Suddenly the medicine man flings himself like a tiger cat upon the body of the patient, and bites or sucks the part where the mischief is supposed to be. All look on in eager expectation, and when he rises he spits out a bear's tooth, or a morsel of bone or something of the kind, announcing that this has been the cause of all the trouble, and that the sick man will now live. 'Who can resist my manitou? Is he not the master of life?' exclaims the doctor triumphantly, handing round for examination whatever he has pretended to extract from the body. Or if the case was to be considered as not yet out of danger, he prescribed some absurd ceremony to propitiate the spirit, most likely a gorging feast, which would be cheerfully undertaken by all present who were not insensible to the duties of humanity. And it would be well for the patient if his physician's favourite method of treatment did not consist of making him swallow a cat's claw or a snake's skin attached to a string, by which it was presently to be pulled up again out of his stomach, or some other disgusting and horrible infliction enough to kill the poor fellow outright.

After this, if the sick person recovered, the doctor took all the credit; if, on the other hand, death ensued, there were many excuses for throwing the blame off himself; either his

directions had not been implicitly followed, or the medicine lodge had not been properly built, or anything had been wrong but the pretensions of the pow-wow. When the patient lingered for a time, the physician would continue his visits so long as the relations were able and willing to pay for the same. As soon as nothing more was to be got out of them, it was his professional cue to pronounce sentence of death. Nor was he always content to leave nature to herself at this point. To keep up his own reputation, he would sometimes persuade the family that, all hope being gone, the kindest thing they could do for their dear departing friend would be to put an end to his sufferings.

A curious affair of this kind happened in 1782 among the Choctaws, if Leclerc Milfort's relation is to be believed. A poor man had been given up thus, and suspected that the doctor was consulting with his friends about some such happy despatch. But clinging to life, even against the opinion of the faculty, he made a great effort and crawled into the woods by night without being noticed. When his absence was discovered, the doctor proclaimed him dead, telling what stories we can imagine as to the way in which the body had been flown off with, and very likely hinting that this was a judgment against the relations for having lost any time in carrying out his advice. At last, finding no other explanation of the disappearance, they became persuaded that the doctor was right.

But meanwhile the fugitive invalid, so far from being dead, was actually getting better now that he was left to himself. He managed to catch an opossum and treat himself with some food, which was probably what he wanted more than any other medicament. He durst not return to undergo the professional sentence that had been passed upon him, but with much suffering made his way to the Creeks, among whom he com-

pletely recovered his health. Then, after some time, he went back to his own people, and arrived just as they were celebrating his own funeral! At the sight of him they were seized with horror: some stood trembling and speechless, some fell on the ground, some ran into the woods. Not a little disturbed in his own mind by such a reception, he entered the lodge of an old neighbour, who received him as a real ghost, indignantly asking him why he came back from the land of spirits to trouble them, while they were doing so much to make him rest in peace.

Seeing that his friends were decided on his being a dead man and did not thank him for renewing their sorrow, the poor fellow went back to the Creeks, married among them, and there spent the rest of his life. The Choctaws came in time to know the mistake they had made, and often begged him to return, but he declined to have anything more to do with a people who were in such a hurry for his death. It is satisfactory, however, to learn that the deceiving doctor was executed as a humbug, when the facts of the case became known.

We may well be astonished at the faith put in such mockery of the healing art, in spite of the many failures that must have been evident. Although J. D. Hunter declares that he knew of few irreligious Indians, *except the pow-wows*, it seems probable that this class of men were not always without honest confidence in their own mummeries; at all events, they might often be found drumming and singing for hours together to cure themselves of some obstinate complaint. Yet sometimes the tricks of an impostor were so manifestly feeble that he would be hooted off the stage of his operations, even if nothing worse happened to him. Tanner mentions a case of this sort. A Naudoway Indian had fallen ill, and his friends sought the aid of an old medicine man called *Muk-kwah*, The Bear.

“Give me,” said the old man, “ten beaver skins, and I will use my art to relieve him.” As we had left our peltries behind, and killed but few beaver since we started, we could raise only nine; but we gave him a piece of cloth, which was more than equal in value to one beaver, and he consented to begin. He prepared his lodge for the first day’s practice before the patient was admitted; he then being brought in, was seated on a mat near the fire. Old *Muk-kwah*, who was a ventriloquist of but indifferent powers, and a medicine man of no great fame, imitated as well as he could various sounds, and endeavoured to make those standing by believe they proceeded from the breast of the sick man. At length he said he heard the sound of bad fire in the breast of the Naudoway, and putting one hand to his breast, the other and his mouth to the back, he continued for some time blowing and rubbing, when he, as if by accident, dropped a little ball upon the ground. After again blowing and rubbing, alternately dropping the little ball and rubbing it between his hands, he at length threw it into the fire, where it burned with a little whizzing noise like damp powder. This did not surprise me at all, as I saw he had taken the precaution to sprinkle a little powder on that part of the floor of the lodge where the ball fell. Perceiving, probably, that what he had now done was not likely to prove satisfactory to his employers, he pretended that there was a snake in the breast of the sick man, which he could not remove till the following day, when, with similar preparations and similar mummeries, he seemed to draw out of the body of the sick man a small snake. One of his hands he kept for some time on the place from which he pretended to have drawn the snake, as he said the hole could not close immediately. The snake he refused to destroy, but laid it carefully aside for preservation, lest, as he said, it should get into somebody else.

‘This ill-conducted imposition did not fail to excite the ridi-

culc of the Naudoways, and had no perceptible effect on the sick man. They soon learned to imitate his several noises, and made him a subject for sarcasm and ridicule. Some of the more sensible and respectable men among the Crees advised us to have nothing more to say to Muk-kwah, as he was esteemed but a fool among them.'

But a medicine man who knew his trade could hardly fail to get a firm hold on the fears and respect of his neighbours. These sorcerers were credited with the power of harming as well as of healing. The orthodox Indian had a firm belief in witchcraft, and, like our own ancestors, was inclined to attribute to ugly and ill-tempered old women a special taste and talent that way. The common device for bewitching an enemy was the same as that so familiar in the dark doings of the old world too. A figure of the person in view was drawn, or an image of him made, and sharp points being stuck into this representation, it was believed that the corresponding parts of the body represented would suffer in like manner. It is not two hundred years since the Puritans of Salem perpetrated a most astonishing series of judicial murders, as the punishment of crimes that existed only in the malicious feelings and hysterical imaginations of a few neighbours of the accused. It is but a hundred years ago that grave divines were found to maintain the reality of witchcraft. Even among ourselves at the present day, there is from time to time discovered a lingering credulity on the same subject. It need be no wonder, then, if an Indian that came to suffer from some inexplicable ailment set it down to the magic practices of some one who bore a grudge against him, and had interest with the powers of evil. If a pest were raging in the village, any bird of prey that might be seen raging above the banquet of death, would not fail to be taken for the manitou of him who had wrought this calamity.

And so the Indian physicians, like the lawyer whose instructions were, '*No case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney,*' when they found themselves at a loss to explain their patient's symptoms, had an easy way out of the difficulty, in ascribing them to the sorcery of some other practitioner, which must be counteracted by their own medicine. If the supposed enchanter were at ever so great a distance, they would yet undertake to resist and conquer his spells. But sometimes two rival pow-wows met face to face, and then came the tug of war! Armed with all the emblems and implements of their craft, they would enchant away against each other at the pitch of their voices, each calling on his own guardian spirit, till one or the other was driven, hoarse and exhausted, from the field. And as a further proof that their art might be self-delusion as well as deceit, the beaten party at one of these conjuring bouts has been known to take to his bed, refuse all nourishment, and die in the dismal belief that his more energetic opponent had full power to pronounce this doom upon him!

It appears, also, that the use of more material means of secret destruction was not unknown; there were some sorcerers, doubtless, who trusted more or less in the devil, but did not fail to keep their poisons ready. No great moral discredit would be attached to such secret means of murder among the Indians, who looked upon killing as a highly practical art, a thing to be done with as much certainty and as little risk to the doer as possible.

Heckewelder tells an amusing story of a Quaker named John Anderson, who, trading among the Indians, and being much respected by them for his honesty, felt bound to lift up his testimony against their superstitions. To expose the pretensions of the pow-wows, he challenged two of them to a public *séance*, at which they should try their best to work him all the harm they could. The tribesmen begged their white

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THE QUAKER AND THE CONJURER.

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friend not to venture on such a dangerous experiment, but he persisted in his proposal. So a conjuror was brought to the encounter, who declared that he 'could an' he would,' but wouldn't for the world do any harm to such a good man and such a friend to all his race; his spells were only to be used against bad people. This excuse the Indians found highly reasonable. But a second conjuror, who had a greater reputation to keep up, accepted the challenge, to the great concern of the white man's well-wishers. Mr. Anderson only stipulated that the dealer with diabolical powers should sit twelve feet off from him, and should make use of no fleshly weapons. To this the magician readily agreed, for he boasted that he could do the business at the distance of a hundred miles. Then, amid profound silence and attention, he set to work at his antics, howls, writhings, and so forth. But the Quaker remained quite cool and sound, ironically encouraging his adversary to keep at it and spare no pains. The medicine man, knowing that his fame was at stake, redoubled his efforts, but in vain; he could neither frighten nor flurly the broad-brimmed man of common sense. At last he gave up the attempt in despair, declaring that the white people eat much salt, which was an effectual antidote against his charms! The Indians are said to have accepted this explanation as quite natural, fully believing that nothing but salt had saved the Quaker.

Sometimes a very small smattering of scientific knowledge enabled the white men to outdo the Indian wonder-workers at their own game, as in the case of some Frenchmen who found themselves in danger of being scalped, whereupon one of them tore off his periwig and threw it on the ground, telling the amazed savages to take it if they dared; and they didn't. He then announced that they had better mind what they were about, since he was able to burn up the water in their rivers and set fire to their forests, in proof of which he burned some

brandy before their eyes, and lighted a rotten stump by means of a burning glass which he happened to have in his pocket. The Indians, witnessing for the first time the resources of these strangers, saw it advisable to make friends with them, and to send them home not only with their hair on their heads, but with a handsome load of presents. We may be sure that both Frenchmen and Englishmen have often turned such prodigies to excellent account, ever since Captain John Smith's life was saved by the exhibition of a pocket compass which he luckily had about him when taken prisoner. A vial of phosphorus or quicksilver, skilfully used, would generally establish the possessor as a medicine man of the highest calibre.

There were medicine men of all degrees of professional ability, and some of them had evidently acquired no little skill in feats of juggling and sleight of hand. They would make believe to swallow arrows and breathe out flames; they could handle red-hot stones, play with living serpents, make liquid appear in empty vessels, and plunge their bare arms into boiling water without any apparent injury. The tricks commonly attributed to spiritualistic mediums were familiar to them, and some of them might have made a good living by exhibiting their dexterity in England or the States. 'A common performance,' says Tanner, 'is that of suffering oneself to be shot at with a marked bullet, which had been previously shown to all the persons sitting in the lodge. The medicine man stands at one end of the lodge, with a small wooden bowl in his hand; and his companion, after having exhibited the bullet, loads the gun in the sight of all present, then, dancing and singing backwards and forwards, discharges the piece, apparently at the head, but taking particular care not to hit him. As soon as the smoke is dispersed, the one who had stood to receive the fire is seen with a ball in his dish. With this he dances, exultingly and shouting, three or

four times around the lodge. Other tricks are played with little puppets of wood and feathers, moved by strings, but kept concealed in sacks or otherwise.' We, who have seen such performances at the Crystal Palace or the Egyptian Hall, might be moved only to laughter by all this hocus-pocus, but the Jesuit fathers beheld it with amazement and pious horror, concluding that demons were still allowed to display their agency in human affairs; and we need not, then, doubt that the ignorant Indians would be still more deeply impressed by the supernatural appearance of these strange doings.

We have all along been treating those medicine marvels as wholly due to trickery and delusion. But it is only fair to suggest that they might occasionally be regarded in another light, which light, in the present state of scientific knowledge, is so much wrapped in darkness that we cannot profitably enter into the consideration of it. There are some strange phenomena of morbid and abnormal states of consciousness,—such as mesmerism, animal magnetism, clairvoyance, and the like,—which have scarcely received the attention they deserve from philosophers, and have been too much given up to charlatans and enthusiasts. If, as most men of science are inclined to agree, the existence of these phenomena cannot be disputed, it seems only reasonable to suppose that some of them may not have been beyond the knowledge and control of the Indians. How otherwise are we to account for many instances in which sensible, well-educated, and by no means credulous observers have been fain to conclude that these professors of magic really did appear to have power and insight outside of the known limits of human faculties? Prophecies that actually were fulfilled; visions that turned out after all to be matters of fact; fits of mental paralysis that could be brought on at the will of another mind: when all is said and done, there are some hard cases of this kind for us

to dispose of as we best can. In so delicate a question, we may be glad to follow such an authority as Mr. Daniel G. Brinton, who sums up the matter thus :—‘Many tales such as these have been recorded by travellers, and however much they may shock our sense of probability as well-authenticated exhibitions of a power which sways the Indian mind, and which has ever prejudiced it so unchangeably against Christianity and civilisation, they cannot be disregarded. Whether they, too, are but specimens of refined knavery, or whether they are instigations of the devil, or whether they must be classed with other facts as illustrating certain obscure and curious mental faculties, each may decide as the bent of his mind inclines him, for science makes no decision.’

Health and disease were, of course, far from being the only matters with which the medicine men professed to deal in mystery. They were consulted on all subjects beyond the bounds of common sense, to interpret dreams, to detect thieves, to bring rain, to foretell the future, to ensure success in hunting or in love. Like the ancient augurs, they took the auspices before the setting out of any army or expedition ; and they had arts of divination to discover where the enemy was posted and how he might be best attacked. When James Smith was with a band of Chippeways and Ottawas, there was a sudden alarm that their deadly and formidable enemies the Mohawks were upon them. No Mohawks were to be seen, it was a false alarm, but the Indians' minds were not at ease till they had taken the opinion of a sorcerer who happened to be with them. They carried him to the fire, ‘and gave him his *conjuring tools*, which were dyed feathers, the bone of the shoulder-blade of a wild cat, tobacco, etc., and while we were in the bushes Mane-toheoa was in a tent at the fire, conjuring away to the utmost of his ability,’ says hard-headed Smith with a touch of scorn.

The result of the pow-wow's magical operations was an announcement from him that not Mohawks but wolves had disturbed them ; whereupon the scared warriors took his word for it and lay down to sleep. Next morning wolf tracks were actually found near the place.

Smith was rather struck by this verification of the oracle, and remarks that if there were any such thing as a wizard, this old man was as likely to be one as any man. And ' this appeared to me to be most like witchcraft of anything I beheld while I was with them. Though I scrutinized their proceedings in business of this kind, yet I generally found that their pretended witchcraft was either art or mistaken notions whereby they deceived themselves. Before a battle, they spy the enemy's motions carefully, and when they find that they can have considerable advantage and the greatest prospect of success, then the old men pretend to conjure or to tell what the event will be ; and this they do in a figurative manner, which will bear something of a different interpretation, which generally comes to pass as nearly as they foretold. Therefore the young warriors generally believed these old conjurors, which had a tendency to animate and excite them to push on with vigour ;' and the conjurors had every reason to be careful, since they might have to pay with their lives when the supernatural powers did not duly honour the bill drawn upon them.

In their capacity of priests, the medicine men took a leading part in all the public ceremonies of the tribe, and, when these were wanting, there were so many other rites and invocations which they were constantly finding necessary for the welfare of somebody or other, that they must have been amongst the least idle of the Indians. Night and day, and sometimes for days together, their drums would be heard going ; and many an unaccustomed guest in an Indian village has lain sleepless, cursing their monotonous chants as heartily as the booming of

the mosquitoes. When nothing else was doing, they might be teaching the apprentices to their trade, for theirs were sacred songs not to be lightly communicated to the vulgar, but handed down with careful fidelity from one generation of priests to another. And thus among their numerous functions, like the priests of other uncivilised peoples, they came to be the literary men of the nation.

The art of writing was unknown to the Indians, except in the rudimentary form of hieroglyphic pictures, which, indeed, were brought to a high state of perfection among some of the more advanced communities, as in Mexico. All the red men were acquainted with a few plain symbolic figures, which, represented on a grave-post, on the trunk of a barked tree, or, in gigantic characters, on the face of some remarkable rock, were, among the northern tribes, their nearest approach to historical records. But the sacred societies had a secret alphabet, or system of ciphers, for helping them to remember their incantations. On a tablet of wood or scroll of bark would be inscribed rows of rude drawings of animals, men, and other curious figures, which they used as we might do a sheet of music. Each figure was associated in their minds with some bar of the song, and it was thus learned on a mnemonic method similar to that by which some students find it easiest to imprint dates and other dry facts on the memory. Such a copy looked like nothing so much as the kind of riddle called a rebus, but those who had mastered it would readily read off from it both the words and the music of a long rhapsody, that to us would sound as great nonsense as the characters themselves were incomprehensible to the uninitiated.¹ So the pow-

¹ Out of the many specimens given by Mr. Schoolcraft, the following snatch of Indian song may be taken as unusually coherent and comprehensible. It was a war-song:—

1. Drawing of a warrior with wings. 2. A man standing under a star.

wows were, after a fashion, poets and painters, musical composers and artists, as well as priests and physicians.

From the ranks of the forest priesthood, there would here and there stand out one whose superior character and information, or it might be cunning and audacity, caused him to be looked on as a prophet. Such a man, believed to hold specially close and honourable relations with the unseen world, was consulted and obeyed as an oracle on all critical occasions by the tribe which was proud to possess him. The ceremony in which these divines took the auspices has been described for us by many eye-witnesses; the following graphic account is that of Alexander Henry. The band of Indians among whom he was, being in some doubt whether or not to accept Sir William Johnson's invitation to a council, resolved to solemnly invoke and consult their tutelary spirit, the Great Turtle.

The first thing done was to build a wigwam large enough to hold all who desired to be present. Inside of this was erected a small round lodge or tent, covered with moose skins closely fastened by thongs, except at one place where the priest was to enter. This shrine, an indispensable feature of all such dealings with darkness, suggests the *cabinet* of modern miracle-mongers, and it will be noticed that the phenomena exhibited by Indian mediums bear a curious resemblance to certain other quasi-supernatural feats that also made their first appearance on the other side of the Atlantic.

3. A warrior with war-club and rattle. 4. Two eagles beside the sun. 5. A body lying transfixed by an arrow, with what seems a bird of prey standing over it. 6. An odd figure intended to represent a spirit in the sky.

This, being interpreted, reads or sings thus :—

1. I wish for the speed of a bird to pounce on the enemy.
2. I look to the morning star to guide my steps.
3. I devote my body to battle.
4. I take courage from the flight of eagles.
5. I am willing to be numbered with the slain.
6. For even then my name shall be repeated with praise.

'The ceremonies did not commence but with the approach of night. To give light within the house, several fires were kindled round the tent. Nearly the whole village assembled in the house, and myself among the rest. It was not long before the priest appeared, almost in a state of nakedness. As he approached the tent the skins were lifted up as much as was necessary to allow of his creeping under them on his hands and knees. His head was scarcely withinside when the edifice, massy as it has been described, began to shake; and the skins were no sooner let fall than the sounds of numerous voices were heard beneath them, some yelling, some barking as dogs, some howling like wolves, and in this horrible concert were mingled screams and sobs, as of despair, anguish, and the sharpest pain. Articulate speech was also uttered, as if from human lips, but in a tongue unknown to any of the audience.

'After some time these confused and frightful noises were succeeded by a perfect silence; and now a voice, not heard before, seemed to manifest the arrival of a new character in the tent. This was a low and feeble voice, resembling the cry of a young puppy. The sound was no sooner distinguished, than all the Indians clapped their hands for joy, exclaiming that this was the Chief Spirit, the TURTLE, the spirit that never lied! Other voices which they had discriminated from time to time, they had previously hissed, as recognising them to belong to evil and lying spirits which deceive mankind.

'New sounds came from the tent. During the space of half an hour, a succession of songs were heard, in which a diversity of voices met the ear. From his first entrance till the songs were finished, we heard nothing in the proper voice of the priest; but now he addressed the multitude, declaring the presence of the GREAT TURTLE, and the spirit's readiness to answer such questions as should be proposed.

'The questions were to come from the chief of the village,

who was silent, however, till after he had put a large quantity of tobacco into the tent, introducing it at the aperture. This was a sacrifice offered to the spirit; for spirits are supposed by the Indians to be as fond of tobacco as themselves. The tobacco accepted, he desired the priest to inquire whether or not the English were preparing to make war on the Indians, and whether or not there were at Fort Niagara a large number of English troops.

'These questions having been put by the priest, the tent instantly shook, and for some seconds after continued to rock so violently that I expected to see it levelled with the ground. All this was a prelude, as I supposed, to the answers to be given; but a terrific cry announced, with sufficient intelligibility, the departure of the *TURTLE*.

'A quarter of an hour elapsed in silence, and I waited impatiently to discover what was to be the next incident in this scene of imposture. It consisted in the return of the spirit, whose voice was again heard, and who now delivered a continued speech. The language of the *GREAT TURTLE*, like that which we had heard before, was wholly unintelligible to every ear, that of his priest excepted; and it was, therefore, not till the latter gave us an interpretation, which did not commence before the spirit had finished, that we learned the purport of this extraordinary communication.'

In brief, the Great Turtle was stated to declare that having, during the short interval of his absence, crossed Lake Huron and descended the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal, he was now in a position to recommend the policy of treating with the English. On the one hand he reported that the river was covered with boats filled with soldiers, in number like the leaves of the trees, on their way to make war against the Indians, so that resistance would be hopeless. On the other, he assured his votaries that Sir William Johnson, if they

accepted his invitation, would 'fill their canoes with presents, with blankets, kettles, guns, gunpowder, and shot, and large barrels of rum such as the stoutest of the Indians will not be able to lift; and every man will return in safety to his family.' This good news naturally called forth the loudest acclamations, and all the Indians were eager to take part in such a desirable mission of peace.

The public business being thus settled, any individuals who might be anxious as to the welfare of sick or absent friends were at liberty to consult the spirit on their own account, and the Turtle's medium was kept busy till nearly midnight. But before putting a question, it was always necessary to shove beneath the skins of the tent the due offering of tobacco, beads, or other valuables; it appears that the religious rites of all creeds seldom fail to embrace the catholic custom of *making a collection*. Henry himself was tempted to spend some tobacco on the inquiry whether he should ever get back to his own friends and country, and received a most encouraging reply. But he observed, as a rule, that the answers given to these questions allowed of 'much latitude of interpretation,' another feature common to oracles all the world over. The Indian prophets could appreciate the advice of a modern American sage: 'Don't ever prophesy unless ye *know*.'

It is clear that such a soothsayer, who was both cautious and skilful in the exercise of his art, had a very high career always open to him. He inevitably became a statesman whose frenzied utterances had as much, if not more, to do with directing the policy of the tribe as the arguments of the old men or the ambition of the chiefs, since with all his boldness and boasting the Indian was apt to count the cost before setting out on any expedition, and only raw youths would allow their martial excitement to prevent them from listening with prudent respect to this interpreter of the will of the gods. In the fore-

going instance, we have seen the vote of the oracle given in favour of peace, but this was not always the case; the most resolute and combined attacks upon the English power were inspired by some religious enthusiast, as in the formidable war of Pontiac, who largely owed his power over so many Indian tribes to the teaching of a great prophet arising among the Delawares.

Indeed, as with the clergy of some other countries, the influence of these men was generally exerted on what may be called the Conservative or reactionary side. Their constant text was the past glories of their race, and they were again and again urging their countrymen to fling away the treacherous luxuries and conveniences that had destroyed the primitive simplicity of their life, to forget the petty jealousies and contests in which they wasted their strength, and to unite in a great effort to drive out the invader, who otherwise would soon overrun the forests and prairies that had been the birthright of the red men. Carried away by such exhortations, many Indians have been known to renounce for a time the use of flint and steel, of kettles and blankets, to sacrifice the dogs which had come to be of almost indispensable service to them in hunting, and to return in some degree to the customs and dress of their ancestors; but it does not seem that the forest Catos ever brought their followers to such a point of consistency as to give up their firearms for long in favour of the good old orthodox bow and arrow, nor was their holy zeal often strong enough to keep them firm against the denounced delights of fire-water, which, in the eyes of an Indian moralist, must have been as the forbidden fruit that brought such fatal consequences on his race.

There is one more aspect in which the medicine men may be regarded. In politics their sympathies were prone to be with the past, but they not unfrequently appeared in the

character of dissenters, social innovators, and religious reformers. At all times, and especially after intercourse with the white men had widened the Indian's notions and disturbed his faith, more or less deluded persons would start up here and there professing to have had a special revelation from Heaven, and to be commissioned to introduce new doctrines and observances or to restore obsolete ones. These teachers often met with a wide and serious hearing, producing what we should call a revival of religion among their followers. Sometimes their teaching was of a decidedly moral and beneficial tendency; sometimes it led to nothing but scenes of fanatical excitement, and the establishment of absurd and debasing ceremonies which, as Tanner says, would be highly disapproved of by 'respectable Indians.'

Tanner relates the rise and progress of three such apostleships in the course of a few years among the Indians with whom he lived. It is to be regretted that space does not allow us to follow him fully in his account of these movements, for here we have a most interesting glimpse of superstition in the making. All three teachers seem to have gained a considerable amount of credit: even the third, who laboured under the disadvantage of being a prophet in his own country, too well known to his neighbours as a lazy fellow and a poor hunter, accused of having eaten his wife, suspected of having a turn for stealing, and perceived to have a weakness for rum. Both by practice and precept, this man did more harm than good; but for two or three years after the revival excited by the first prophet, Tanner distinctly testifies that war, drunkenness, wife-beating, and such sins of semi-barbarous life were much less frequent than formerly, till the serious impression produced among the tribe had worn off. He himself, almost as ignorant as his Indian companions, confesses that he was not a little staggered and more than once carried away by the

prevailing enthusiasm ; but, on the whole, he felt inclined to be sceptical as to these supernatural pretensions, and was confirmed in his want of faith by the irreverence with which the traders treated the whole affair ; for, as he argued with himself, if the Great Spirit had any communications for the world below, the revelation would probably be made not through Indians, but white men.

The ignorant hunter did not suspect what Christendom has had but too good cause to know, that not even white men are proof against outbreaks of furious fanaticism and dark delusion. There is no faith so pure that it has not been distorted and degraded by some of its hypocritical or insane votaries. When such and so many tales of religious imposture are to be read in the history of all nations, we need not be surprised that the untutored mind of the poor Indian was so easily deceived by the pretensions of his medicine men.



CHAPTER XI.

TECUMSEH AND THE PROPHET.



There were three great Indian chiefs who, at various times, were able to unite large numbers of their countrymen under their influence, and make a serious effort to drive back the intruders on their hunting grounds—Philip towards the end of the seventeenth century, Pontiac in the middle of the last century, and Tecumseh at the beginning of this century. With some account of Tecumseh these historical sketches may fitly close, since his was the last desperate struggle for mastery in the backwoods. After him the Indians might still be an annoyance, but they were no longer a danger to the settlers of this region; and the scene of conflict between the two races had rolled westward from the forests to the prairies.

Among all the tribes whom the white men encountered, they found no more fierce and inveterate enemies than the

Shawnees, so often mentioned in these pages. To this tribe belonged Tecumseh, and he was born at the time when the hostile peoples were closing for their long combat, and in the heart of the forests which were its arena. Pontiac died in 1767, and next year, or soon afterwards, came into being the warrior destined to take up the hatchet that had fallen from his hands. Tecumseh was in his bark cradle when the axes of the pioneers began to echo through the valley of the Ohio ; his boyhood passed in the stormy times of the revolutionary war ; before he grew up his father had been killed in battle with the white men, and he himself had fled with the remnant of his people from their burning villages ; his own first arms were borne against the comrades of Boone and Kenton. A youth spent in such a school taught him to hate the conquerors with a hatred like that sworn by Hannibal against the Romans ; and when other spirits were broken by losses and humiliations, this man took it for the task of his life to kindle the smouldering embers of resistance into a fierce flame, that once more broke out upon the borders of the settlements, threatening them with blackness and ruin.

It is said that Tecumseh was in every great battle with the whites fought in his time ; they certainly had to thank him for many a dashing attack and harassing raid on the settlements. He early proved himself one of the best warriors and hunters of his tribe, two characters commonly united, since the same qualities were required in woodland warfare, whether against beasts or men. In all athletic games, too, he was distinguished, yet not less was his renown for wisdom and eloquence in council. A master of Indian eloquence, his lofty bearing and graceful form bore out the dignity of his speech, and extorted the admiration even of his enemies. His character was high in all the virtues of Indian life : he was temperate, unselfish, liberal to the aged and infirm. He had a soul above the love

of absurd finery or sensual pleasures ; he did not, like the rest of his people, fight for booty and cruelty, but for glory and patriotism. So it is not surprising that when, in 1795, peace was made at Greenville between the whites and Indians, we find Tecumseh, though still a young man, one of the chiefs of his tribe, and a chief exercising no ordinary power, which soon began to be felt far beyond the councils of the Shawnees.

This power was increased by means which the rulers of mankind have always been too ready to enlist in their service. The chief had a twin brother named Elskwatawa, who fully shared his resentment against the white men, but whose 'gifts,' as the Pathfinder would say, were of a different order. Entering heartily into his brother's schemes, this man undertook, for his part, to work upon the superstitions of his people. Though hitherto he is said to have been remarkable for nothing but stupidity and drunkenness, he now either pretended or believed himself to have had a revelation from the Great Spirit, and set up as a prophet with such success that he has become known in American history as *the* prophet. Yet his teaching was, in its main points, the same as that of the other enthusiasts that, as mentioned in the chapter on Medicine Men, so frequently appeared among the Indians ; and notably he appeared to be an imitator of the Delaware prophet who was such a valuable coadjutor in Pontiac's conspiracy.

The red men—so ran the revelation—were no more to fight with each other, or beat their wives, or get drunk, or lie, or steal. They were to have nothing more to do with the 'Long-knives,' were to give up the arts and luxuries which had been introduced among them, and to return to the primitive peacefulness and simplicity of the Indian golden age as it existed in a red philosopher's imagination. If they would obey the prophet's injunctions, all their troubles would cease, the Great Spirit would render them invincible to any enemy that should

come against them, the red race would rise to a power and glory far above that of the palefaces, and after death the faithful would be admitted to a paradise which it had been granted him to see in a vision. But if they refused to believe and repent, he was commissioned to declare that the Great Spirit was angry with his children, and would utterly destroy them. In such teaching we may find some hint of the influence of Christian doctrine. And, in fact, Elskwatawa is known to have had relations with the Shakers, a sect which had just appeared in the backwoods, and which claimed him as a disciple of their congenial creed. It is also stated that he spent part of his life in Canada, where from the white men he may have picked up some useful lessons in the means of amazing and befooling his own people.

These reforms would certainly have had a most salutary influence on the vigour of the Indian tribes; and if the prophet's object had been the true welfare of his race, he might have proved one of their greatest benefactors. But ignorant fanaticism was more prominent in his mission than enlightened morality. He insisted upon other trivial and useless observances which repelled sensible men, and which even the most zealous of his adherents found it difficult to keep up. They were commanded to kill their dogs. They were not to use flint and steel in kindling fire, but to rub dry sticks together like their pious ancestors. They were to throw away their medicine bags, and set their faces against wizards, for the prophet naturally disapproved of all magic but his own. Other special rites and mummeries were enjoined, which were probably upon the usual model of such matters among the Indians.

The high pretensions of the prophet were supported by signs and wonders surpassing the ordinary enchantments of the medicine men. Charms of singular efficacy were exhibited. The rumour went abroad that Elskwatawa could make pun-

kings grow the size of a wigwam, and ears of corn big enough to feed twelve men. One piece of luck or craft was of excellent service to him. Whether or no he had been informed of it by some of his English friends in Canada, it appears that he was able to announce an eclipse of the sun, which duly took place, and no one who remembers with what dread this phenomenon was beheld even in European countries, not so very long ago, will doubt the credit that such a prediction gave him with the Indians, for whom an eclipse was a specially terrible and wholly supernatural event.

The reputation of the prophet spread as far as his brother's, and pilgrims came long and dangerous journeys to witness the miracles of which they had heard. Tecumseh did not neglect to work upon the minds of these men; many of them went home eager to propagate the new religious and political doctrines among their people. Emissaries or imitators of the prophet appeared in various places, producing a considerable amount of enthusiasm by their preaching and incantations. At least one of the agitators mentioned in a former chapter, as visiting John Tanner's tribe, was evidently connected with this movement. Here is Tanner's account of the mysteries which produced such an impression. The chiefs had been won over by the prophet's missionary to appoint a time and place for the public profession of adherence to his teaching :—

‘When the people, and I among them, were brought into the long lodge prepared for this solemnity, we saw something carefully concealed under a blanket, in figure and dimensions bearing some resemblance to the form of a man. This was accompanied by two young men, who, it was understood, attended constantly upon it, made its bed at night as for a man, and slept near it. But while we remained, no one went near it, or raised the blanket which was spread over its unknown contents. Four strings of mouldy and discoloured

beans were all the remaining visible insignia of this important mission. After a long harangue, in which the prominent features of the new revelation were stated and fixed upon the attention of all, the four strings of beans—which, we were told, were made of the flesh itself of the prophet—were carried with much solemnity to each man in the lodge, and he was expected to take hold of each string at the top, and draw them gently through his hand. This was called “shaking hands with the prophet,” and was considered as solemnly engaging to obey his injunctions, and accept his mission as from the Supreme.’

There were many Indians who refused to be befooled by the prophet and his messengers. In some tribes this party kept the upper hand ; in others, they were borne down by the zeal of the new converts, and several unfriendly chiefs were deprived of their authority through the machinations of the prophet. But he hit on more effectual means of getting rid of his most active opponents : he took to accusing them of witchcraft, a crime held in horror among the Indians, and his bare word seems, in several cases, to have been enough to condemn them. Old men and women were burned, or otherwise put to death, for a crime, the real guilt of which was want of faith in the prophet. And as Tecumseh was acting in concert with his brother, and must have had a share in these murders, this must be pronounced to be a serious blot on his character.

It was at this time that the execution of Leatherlips took place, at the prophet’s instigation, as was understood. The story of the ‘Doomed Chief’ has been often told, and is worth a digression for the sake of the glimpse it gives us of how such scenes passed among the Indians. The old Wyandot chief, known to the whites by the above name, was a man of good character among the American settlers, and his real crime seems to have been that he favoured them rather than Tecumseh’s party. He was openly seized in the Ohio settle-

ments by a party of six men who had been sent in search of him. Some of the white inhabitants saw him a prisoner in their hands, with his arms bound by a cord, and, on asking what he had done, were told: 'Very bad Indian—make good Indian sick — make horse sick — make die — very bad chief!'

Whatever the captors intended to do, was not to be done in a hurry. Two or three hours were spent in a council, where the man who seemed to be on his trial sat calm and dignified, and all the anger was on the side of the accusers. The result was that he was condemned to death. Mr. Sells, one of the white men present, tried to interfere, offering the leader of the party a valuable horse in ransom for the prisoner's life. The Indians consented to look at the horse; then they held another palaver; but finally it was declared that they were not to be moved from their purpose.

Still the utmost deliberation was shown in carrying out the sentence. Pointing to the sun, the leader of the party announced that the execution was to be at four o'clock. The other Indians amused themselves in the interval by running and jumping. The condemned man walked slowly to his wigwam, ate a dinner of venison, dressed himself in his finest clothes, and painted his face. The hour having arrived, he walked calmly out and shook hands in silence with the spectators. He showed some emotion on coming to Mr. Sells, grasping his hand warmly, pointing to the sky, and speaking earnestly in his own language. He then led the way to his grave, holding himself as one for whom it had no terrors, and raising his death-song in a loud, clear voice. Behind him marched the warriors, keeping time with his chant. The astonished white men brought up the rear. Few of them would have thought much of killing an Indian in fair fight, but they were ill at ease to see a fellow-creature put to death

in cold blood at the bidding of such an unimposing judge and jury.

Some little way from the wigwam, they came to a shallow grave, which the Indians had dug unknown to the rest of the spectators. Here the old man knelt down and offered up a solemn prayer. The other chiefs also prayed in their own language. When they rose, Mr. Sells made one more effort to interfere, telling them that if they were determined to take the man's life, they should at least not do it within the bounds of the settlement. To this their leader gave an angry answer. 'No!—good Indian 'fraid—he no go with this bad man—mouth give fire in the dark night—good Indian 'fraid—he no go! my friend,' he continued, 'me tell you, white man bad man, white man kill him, Indian say nothing.'

Nothing more could be said: Mr. Sells and the rest had to look quietly on at what they suspected to be no better than a murder. But how was the deed to be done? The Indians had left all their rifles at the wigwam; no weapons appeared upon the scene. The prisoner again sank on his knees and prayed; then he remained kneeling without the slightest sign of fear or discomposure. Suddenly one of the warriors drew from beneath his capote a bright tomahawk, walked rapidly up to the victim, brandished it for an instant, then struck with all his strength on the chief's grey hair. He rolled over on the ground, and as he lay struggling in the agonies of death, the Indians pointed out to those standing by the drops of sweat upon his neck and face, declaring it to be a proof of his guilt that he died so hard. Two or three more blows put him out of pain. The body was hastily covered up in its grave, dressed and decorated as it was; then the executioners turned away and went back to give an account of their errand to those who had sent them.

The offence of some of these victims of fanaticism is said to

have been that they professed themselves Christians ; if this be true, it is one of the few instances of religious persecutions which the Indians have to set off against our Inquisitions and Star Chambers. History shows that whole communities may go mad as well as individuals ; and if we knew all that went on at that time among the red men, we might find them seized by an epidemic delusion like that of the Popish Plot in London, or of the Reign of Terror in Paris. In some places the power of the prophet seems to have been unbounded. Yet the work which Tecumseh had at heart went on slowly, for the Indian nature was more capable of flickering outbursts of passion than of such a steady glow as possessed his soul for years, and the excitement would die out in one tribe before it could be kindled in another. He had to combat with jealousies, suspicions, and ancient feuds ; the tribes to be gained over might lie at a journey of weeks and months from each other ; it would have proved a miracle beyond the prophet's power to unite such a people in any common and simultaneous action.

The centre of the agitation was among the Ohio tribes, which, broken by losses in war, and driven from their native soil, were now in a restless, disorganized state, specially favourable for the reception of wild and novel ideas. Tecumseh and his brother changed their residence two or three times after the peace of Greenville had established a new frontier between the Indian country and the settlements ; but in 1808, the prophet fixed his headquarters on the Tippecanoe in Indiana, and gathered together several hundred Indians of various tribes, Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, Potawattomies, Ottawas, Chippeways, and Kickapoos. These were chiefly young men, not the most reputable members of their tribes. In fact, the new settlement seems to have been a very cave of Adullam ; and, with all his arts, the prophet found it hard to hold his followers together, or to keep them in order. While his

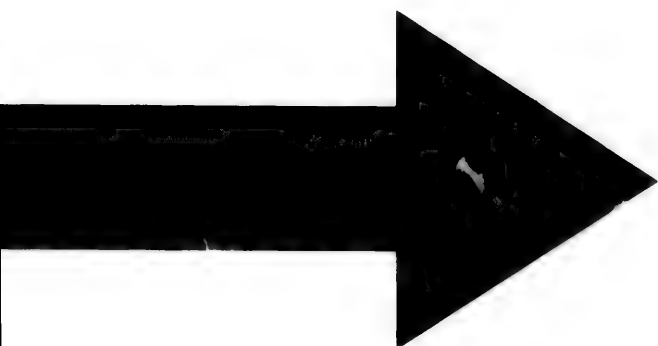
brother was thus trying to form a nucleus for future operations, Tecumseh's chief share in their grand designs was travelling from tribe to tribe, and rousing his fellow-warriors to a general crusade against the white men.

If every Indian chief had been as wise and earnest as this one, the backwoods might still be free from the axe and plough. He saw clearly the causes which were at work to destroy his people, and the only means by which they could stay the advance of the invaders. His constant text was that the tribes must follow the example of the United States, by allying themselves and making a common effort to preserve their independence against the nation of the 'Seventeen Council Fires.' Now or never they must make a stand, if they did not wish to be driven into the lakes, or reduced to a slavery like that of the negroes. We can find no fault with the justice or the policy of these arguments; and we can imagine that the Indians were in no mood to deny their wrongs, or to listen coldly to an orator who called on them to right themselves.

'Brothers,' he said, 'when the white men first set foot on our grounds, they were hungry; they had no place on which to spread their blankets, nor to kindle their fires. They were feeble; they could do nothing for themselves. Our fathers pitied their distress, and shared freely with them whatever the Great Spirit had given his red children. They gave them food when hungry, medicine when sick, spread skins for them to sleep on, and gave them grounds, that they might hunt and raise corn. Brothers, the white people are like poisonous serpents; when chilled, they are feeble and harmless, but invigorate them with warmth, and they sting their benefactors to death.' ¹

¹ The genuineness of this speech, as of almost all celebrated Indian speeches, has been denied: but there can be no doubt that it expresses Tecumseh's sentiments and the truth of the case.





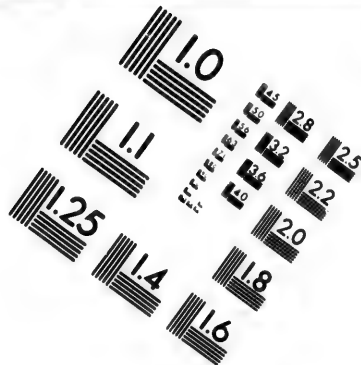
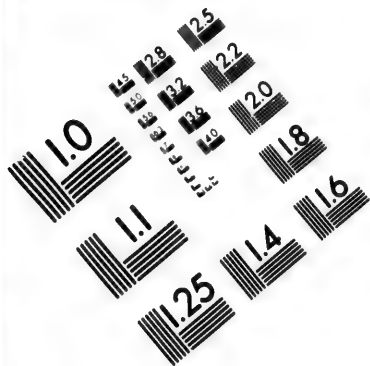
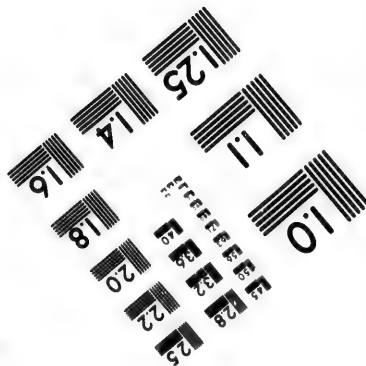
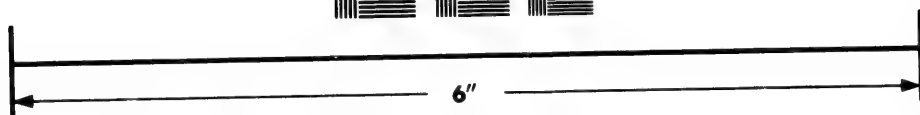
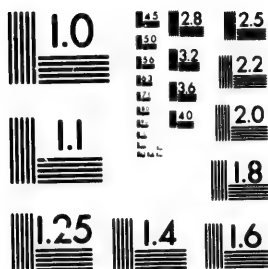


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There was a social as well as a religious and political side to the movement. The red men, if they wished to remain independent, must return to the simple wants and customs of their brave fathers, and cast away the artificial habits that were so fatally at work among them. Tecumseh's own ways of life set an example in this respect, though he was not consistent enough to renounce firearms, powder and lead being of only too valuable aid to his schemes. Despising the bright cloth and blankets of the traders, he went dressed in leggings and shirt of deerskin, on occasions of ceremony appearing in naked magnificence, ornamented with black paint, a mane of eagle feathers, and buffalo tails hanging from his back and elbows. He held strongly to the Indian principle of community of property in land, which, in his view, had been given by the Great Spirit to the red men, and to them only; and his chief quarrel with the Indiana settlers was about the right of any tribe or part of a tribe to bargain away their interest, as less true Indians were too ready to do, for the means of a spell of idleness or intoxication. At one of the meetings between the Indians and the whites to discuss this question, he refused to enter a house, and insisted on holding the council under the open sky, the home of his ancestors. And when he had finished a speech, and the governor sent him a polite message by the interpreter, who told him that 'his father desired him to take a chair,' the chief loftily rejected both this title of superiority and this convenience of civilisation. '*My father!*' he exclaimed. '*The sun is my father, and the earth is my mother, and on her bosom will I repose.*' Then, with Indian dignity, he seated himself on the ground.

In the discharge of his mission, Tecumseh traversed, more than once, the whole border of the States; we hear of him among the Chippeways and Potawattomies of the lakes, among the Osages and Kansas west of the Mississippi, among the

Creeks of Alabama and Seminoles of Florida. Everywhere his appeals were received with interest, even if without success. His own tribe, the Shawnees, though settled in the north, had originally come from the south, and his mother is said to have belonged to a southern tribe; but, apart from this connection, his personal reputation, spread far and wide through the swamps and forests, was enough to secure him a hearing. Again, if all stories are true, the prodigies of nature came to his aid. He or the prophet declared to their amazed disciples that when the time came to take up the hatchet, they should see the arms of Tecumseh stretched out in the heavens, and lo! in the autumn, the great comet of 1811 flamed across the darkness night after night. Meeting with opposition among the Creeks, he threatened that when he came back to the north, he would stamp with his foot on the ground, and shake down every house in their town. The unbelieving warriors puffed their pipes, but they remembered this speech when an earthquake brought their houses about their ears, and the cry arose that this was the shake of Tecumseh's foot.

He did meet with a good deal of opposition; some of the southern as well as the northern chiefs showed a natural jealousy of the influence of this stranger. But in an Indian tribe, as elsewhere, the most numerous and active politicians are frequently found in the class which is 'desirous of new things,' and easily moved to passion and folly. Tecumseh's preaching caused a good deal of dissension in the tribes, which, in the case of the Creeks, grew to a civil war. He was so far successful as to produce a general agitation among the Indians along the American border; but, before it came to a head, the plans of the two brothers received a rude shock for which they were scarcely prepared.

General Harrison, afterwards President of the United States, had been appointed governor of the Indiana territory, now the

field of the pioneers, Ohio having been overrun and formed into a State. The hardest thing he had to do was keeping an eye upon the prophet and his followers at Tippecanoe. Rightly or wrongly, this motley crew got the name of being little better than a horde of bandits. They refused to remove from land claimed as bought by the whites, and it was clear that their purpose was not to support themselves by peaceable labour, though, when destitute of provisions, they were not ashamed to come begging from the American authorities ; nor was begging the worst of it. Complaints of robbery and murder were brought against them by the settlers, who in vain demanded the surrender of the guilty persons. On the other hand, they complained, not without reason, that the white men took the law into their own hands, committing outrages in return, and that their lands were still being encroached on by the insatiable intruders. Thus the ill-feeling went on increasing on both sides, and for two or three years the whole district was kept in disquietude by suspicions and rumours that another Indian war was brewing.

Such rumours were denied by Tecumseh, but he was so inapt a liar that his professions scarcely deceived the governor. Conferences were held to explain and settle their grievances, but each party appeared at the place of meeting attended by a strong guard, and on one occasion, at least, they had nearly come to blows in course of the negotiations. While the chief was speaking with great vehemence, his followers began to handle their arms threateningly ; General Harrison started up and drew his sword ; the bystanders armed themselves with cudgels and brickbats, and if a party of soldiers had not hurried up, there is no saying what might have happened. But Tecumseh calmed himself and restrained his men ; he knew that he was not yet strong enough for an outbreak, and his cue still was to profess a desire for peace.

General Harrison, however, had no idea of allowing such an enemy to choose his own time for declaring himself. Seeing that war must come sooner or later, he resolved to take the bull by the horns and have the matter settled without further delay. Having collected a force of nearly a thousand men, mostly raw militia, he set out towards the end of 1811, and marched to break up the prophet's nest of hornets on the Tippecanoe.

Our scene is now changed from the backwoods to the edge of the vast prairies that roll between Ohio and the Rocky Mountains. Over this open country, still broken by patches of wood, lay General Harrison's way from Vincennes, at that time the outpost of western colonisation. He kept a good look-out, expecting to be attacked at any dangerous point; but he marched with interpreters in front, and made efforts to come to a parley with the bands of Indians who were seen hovering round his army. He had also sent messages to the prophet by friendly Indians, expressing his desire of making a peaceable arrangement. No answer, however, was returned to these overtures till he arrived close upon the Indian town. Here three Indians came to meet him with a 'talk' from the prophet, who at last condescended to declare that he too meant peace, and proposed a further talk next day. 'To-morrow' was always the Indians' favourite time for doing business. The general was quite willing to wait for the proposed negotiations, and halted for the night upon a slight rising ground; but though it was so late that he neglected to fortify his camp by felling timber, as had been done hitherto on the march, he took good care that his men should encamp in order of battle, lying on their arms, and his sentinels kept a keen watch across the mile or so of prairie which separated them from the Indian town.

Here, throughout the night, all was excitement and prepara-

tion, that had already, indeed, been kept up for days, and looked little like the prelude to a treaty. It was a cold, dark winter night, and a drizzling rain fell, which did not damp the fury of the war-songs and war-dances, amid which the prophet waved his torch, exhibited his magic beans, and outdid himself in frantic appeals to the credulity of his followers. Whoever touched this talisman, he told them, would become invulnerable in the battle into which he was using all his craft to provoke them. The Great Spirit, he declared, would give light to them, and cover the eyes of the white men with darkness. Every shot or blow of theirs would be fatal, while the American bullets would fly harmlessly through the air. Already half of the enemy's army were dead, and the other half driven distracted by the force of his incantations. For hours he kept thus working upon their passions and superstition, till the tide of fury rose to its height, and, bursting forth, flowed down upon the sleeping camp. It was the early morning, the red man's usual time for an attack. In numbers they were probably less than Harrison's force. Madly as they threw all thoughts of prudence or good faith to the winds, they were not so far carried away as to neglect their usual tactics; burning with unrestrainable eagerness, they crept stealthily through the long grass of the prairie, and broke suddenly on the alarmed sentinels.

But General Harrison was not a man to be easily caught napping. He had the habit of getting up at four o'clock, and was just drawing on his boots by the fire and talking to his *aide-de-camp* on the chance of their being attacked, while the drummer stood ready to beat the *réveille* at his order, when the yells and the shots of the savages announced that the danger was upon them. No time was lost in meeting it. The whole camp sprang to arms at the first alarm; in two minutes every man was at his post. Most of these men were raw recruits,

yet they behaved with admirable coolness in circumstances that might have tried the nerves of any veteran. Napoleon well says that it is easy to be brave in the excitement of a charge or an open struggle, but that far rarer is that 'two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage' which proves ready for any surprise or emergency.

The first thing done was to put out the camp fires, which were affording a mark for the enemy. Before the sleepers had done rubbing their eyes, they found themselves attacked on all sides at once, the assailants visible only by the fitful flashes that girdled the camp, and their numbers hardly to be guessed by the din of whoops and yells that echoed around from every point. Confident in the lying promises of their prophet, the Indians rushed on with more than their usual impetuosity, and several of them succeeded in penetrating into the hollow square of the encampment, but were soon driven back. Wherever they could find them advancing, the soldiers met them hand to hand. But for the most part General Harrison's brave force had to stand still in the cold and darkness amid the whistling bullets, and return the Indians' fire almost at random, using buckshot cartridges, which, in such a fight, did more execution than balls. In the confusion, it was not always possible to tell friends from foes, and some brave fellows may have fallen by the hands of their own comrades.

Thus the camp was stoutly held till daybreak, which brought a change in the conditions of the combat. The Indians seeing what a slaughter had been made among them after all, lost heart; the soldiers, having the enemy now clear before them, took the offensive, charged with three cheers, and swept the howling horde into flight before the bayonet. If the cavalry had only been able to follow them across the marshy prairie, their ruin would have been complete. As it was, their losses were unusually heavy, this being one of the most desperate

and bloody fights in all the Indian wars. The white men, too, had suffered severely: nearly two hundred were killed and wounded.

All day and the next night they remained in their position, unable to believe that the victory was yet certain. There were rumours that Tecumseh was on his way with a thousand fresh warriors. No enemy, however, appeared more formidable than the Indian dogs that prowled howling round the bodies of the dead; so next morning they advanced upon the prophet's town, which they found deserted, though it had been fortified somewhat scientifically with a zigzag wall of logs. It was plundered and burned, and the army marched back in triumph from this last and not least important battle of the backwoods, which gave to Harrison his popular nickname of 'Old Tippecanoe.' That same year the first steamboat appeared on the western waters.

'Peace has her victories,
Not less renowned than War.'

The power of the prophet was broken. He had taken no part in the battle, but sat on a hill overlooking the scene, busy with the rites and incantations to which his followers trusted so blindly. They came to tell him that the Indians were falling in spite of his magic, but he only sang and gesticulated the more violently, bidding them fight on and it would soon be as he had predicted. When they found how they had been cheated, they overwhelmed him with scorn and reproaches, and some were for putting him to death at once. He feebly tried to defend himself, by saying that his wife had touched his sacred apparatus, and through this contamination destroyed the effect of his charms. Only a few of his own tribe stuck by him after this disaster. One blow had scattered his dangerous confederacy. It may be said here that the prophet soon sank into insignificance. Two or three years later he removed to

the west of the Mississippi, and lived there for some years in such comfort as a pension from the English Government could afford him.

On returning from the south, and learning what had happened in his absence, Tecumseh was carried away by anger against his discomfited brother. He is described as catching him by the hair, shaking him, and upbraiding him in much the same terms as Napoleon or Frederick the Great might have used towards one of their brothers who had proved an unlucky general. The chief might well be angry, when in one day he saw his plans ruined by the foolhardiness of the poor prophet. Yet the two brothers continued to act in concert, and what little influence Elskwatawa still retained for a time, was reflected from the more ardent and unquenchable spirit of the family.

Roused rather than discouraged by defeat, Tecumseh did not abandon his designs, and new means of carrying them out were soon presented most opportunely to his hand. In the American histories of the time, if histories they can be called, England is represented in much the same dark colours as the Evil Power of medieval legends, to whom bold and wicked schemers sold their souls. The English had been accused of backing up the discontented Indians all along against the Americans. It is, unhappily, too true that the frontier settlers and rival traders of the two nations were ever ready to do one another an ill turn, even when their respective Governments professed to be on good terms; nor did our authorities always show themselves such honest and cordial neighbours as they ought to have been to their late enemies, though the charges against them have been unduly exaggerated. Tecumseh was probably not much fonder of 'King George's men' than of the 'Boston men,' for he could see plainly enough that the former were his friends mainly because he could be of use to them,

and he had no desire to serve as cat's-paw to either. Yet it must also be remembered that the Canadians, whether under French or English rule, have generally got on better with the Indians than the people of the States. There are various reasons for this, the most important being that Canada grew more slowly, so that the sons of the soil had more time to reconcile themselves to the new state of things, and were not so harshly pressed upon by the advance of the settlements. It was the Americans who were overrunning Tecumseh's hunting-grounds ; and as Pontiac had tried to enlist the French against the English power, so now he turned to the English for aid against this so vigorous offspring of their own race.

The British authorities were not backward in welcoming such an ally, for at this time war seemed about to break out again between the two civilised nations, that had not yet forgotten the heartburnings of the revolution. It is not clear when Tecumseh began to have dealings with Canada, but the year after the Tippecanoe battle, he appears in the character of a more or less recognised agent of our officers. Once more he travelled the borders, stirring the Indians north and south into excitement, teaching them the 'war-dance of the lakes,' and proclaiming that the great chief beyond the ocean was about to fight on their side. Prophets sprang up like mushrooms, howling down the sober and cautious councillors of their tribe. From Michigan to Alabama, the woods resounded with drumming and dancing. And this fit of delusion did not end in noise : when, in the summer of 1812, war actually began between England and the States, the latter found on their hands a bloody struggle with the natives of the south ; while the invading army which advanced from Canada, was joined by a large contingent of Indians from different tribes, under Tecumseh, the 'king of the woods,' who was soon appointed a general in the British service. At one time he

commanded the unprecedentedly large number of three thousand warriors.

This is not the place for a history of that war, may it always be the last war between England and America! Each side had its victories and disgraces; neither gained more than it lost by the unnatural strife. We were in the wrong, and the Americans had the best of it.

If 'General' Tecumseh had his own ends to serve in fighting for King George, he showed wisdom, courage, and fidelity in the campaign, and proved a most valuable ally. It was in no small degree owing to him that, at first, our arms were successful. When, next year, the English met with reverses, and had to retreat into Canada, closely pursued by General H. rison, the undisciplined Indian bands began to melt away, as was their wont in the hour of plunder or defeat; but the great chief, though by this time he was thoroughly dissatisfied with, and distrustful of, his employers, disdained to desert the cause to which he had engaged himself. He only insisted that one brave effort should be made to retrieve their disasters; and, at his demand, the army turned to bay by the banks of the river Thames, which to-day the traveller to Chicago sees from the Great Western Railway of Canada, and, as he passes through the little town of London, may haply recall

'Parvam Trojam, simulataque magnis
Pergama, et arentem Xanthi cognomine rivum.'

It is said that Tecumseh had a gloomy presentiment of the event of the day, and no longer cared to survive the ruin of his cause. The battle was over almost as soon as begun. A charge of cavalry routed the British soldiers in five minutes. The Indians, partly protected by a swamp, and animated by the war-cry of their leader, continued to resist the horsemen a little longer, but suddenly they turned and fled when they knew that the chief had fallen.

How he met his death seems uncertain, though the story goes that it was by the hand of the leader of the cavalry. A body, supposed to be his, was flayed by some Kentucky riflemen, who showed a savage pride in taking the skin of their great foe to make into razor strops. But the dead chief little deserved such treatment, since his honest hatred of the whites had always been unmingled with cruelty. As a young man, he had protested against the burning of prisoners, and persuaded his tribe to forego this horrible triumph. With all his enthusiasm for the old uncorrupted life of his people, he set his face against the barbarous customs of Indian warfare.

There were scenes of unusual atrocity in the war of 1812, but Tecumseh had no part in them; he is even stated to have shown more zeal for humanity than the English general. On one occasion, a massacre of American prisoners was going on, and the soldiers of the escort, one of whom had already lost his life in the attempt, were unable to protect their charge from the bloodthirsty rage of a band of Indians, when a voice of thunder was heard, as Tecumseh rode up at full speed. He sprang from his horse, hurled to the ground two ruffians, who were in the act of slaughtering an American; then, brandishing his tomahawk and storming like a madman, threw himself between the yelling hundreds and their helpless victims, threatening to kill with his own hands the first man who struck another blow.

In this sketch of the career of Tecumseh, it has been necessary to make too frequent use of such phrases as 'it is said,' 'he seems,' 'the story is,' and so forth. Those who have tried, know the difficulty of weaving into history materials so scanty, so confused, so often distorted by the ignorance and passion of narrators who saw but one side or one corner of the case, and saw that with eyes which had too much blood in them to be clear. At the best, we only catch glimpses of our hero, from

time to time emerging out of the darkness of his native forests ; yet, on the *ex pede Herculem* principle, can we not, from these glimpses, pronounce him to have been a man who would have been great in any land or age? He has been called the 'Napoleon of the West,' but surely he is worthier of some nobler name in spite of his errors.¹ The French emperor and the Indian chief were acting their parts at the same time, each on the grandest stage of his own hemisphere.² But it was selfish ambition and miserable vanity that drove the crowned traitor to deluge Europe with blood at the expense of the deluded nation whose liberties he had strangled, while Tecumseh fought as the brave and true champion of that independence which was as dear to the naked Indians as to the sons of fair France or rich England. Even those with whom he fought have been forced to confess, now the heat of the struggle is over, that he fought not without a high cause. His followers, unused to obedience or union, recognised in him a master spirit, who, towering above the petty jealousies and squabbles of their tribes, had at heart the welfare of all the red men. So now both red and white men hold in honour the memory of the warrior with whom fell the glories of his race.

¹ The parallel between Napoleon and Tecumseh might be followed out much further. The same tale is told of the fondness of both of them in youth for the mimic games of war. Tecumseh also left one son, whose career was as obscure as that of the young King of Rome. The father is said to have charged his tribe not to make the boy their chief, because he was too fair and like a white man.

² As an example of how the interests of all the world are bound together, and how far the effects of any political measure may be felt even by those who have never heard of their authors, it may be mentioned that a good deal of the discontent and restlessness prevalent at this time among the Indians was caused by Napoleon's decrees shutting the ports of Europe against English commerce, and thus interfering with the fur trade which had become so important to the tribes having intercourse with white men.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INDIANS AT WORK.



THE Indian's serious labours were what we speak of as 'sport.' He was brought up to no other occupation than that of a free and independent gamekeeper, with all the world for his preserves; and his chief study, from first to last, was natural history applied to the most practical of purposes. In short, the work to which the red man condescended to turn his

hand, was little else than killing or preparing contrivances to kill.

Other occupations were left to the women. It was they who, in early spring, tapped the maple trees, drawing off the sap into troughs of bark, and boiling down the sugar in great kettles, as they may still be seen doing for the supply of the sweet-toothed ladies of the States. It was they who, in summer, sowed and reaped and ground the great ears of

Indian corn. It was they who, in autumn, gathered the forest fruits, and paddled through the swampy fields of rice, bending the high stalks over their laps, and beating out the grain into the bottom of the canoe. It was they for the most part who, in winter, chopped down and carried the wood for the great fires, without which life was scarcely supportable. Their lords and masters were well content to leave such tasks to them, with such help as they could command from the children not yet employed in the dignified duties of slaughter.

But, of course, it was on hunting that most tribes mainly depended for subsistence—not only for meat, but for clothes, and for the skins and furs with which they must buy from the white traders what had become to them the necessities of life. To be a successful hunter was, with them, the same object of ambition as to become a prosperous man of business among ourselves; and an Indian lad was as much more eager to enter on this career than some of our boys are to leave school, as the arts of destruction are more congenial to the youthful mind than office stools and ledgers. The smart urchin who could turn his hand to killing was henceforth excused from helping the women at their drudgery, and, like a sixth-form boy at a public school, could give over the menial duties of fetching and carrying to the younger fags, who, in their turn, longed for the day when they should have no other masters than the grown-up hunters and warriors.

John Tanner, to whom we are indebted for so many a glimpse into the familiar features of Indian life, describes for us the delight of his maiden deed of woodland prowess. A flock of pigeons had filled the woods; the men were out shooting in all directions, and he, too, would fain smell powder for the first time, that he might thump his little heels on the ground, screaming out the hunter's song of triumph. So his adopted father loaded a large horse pistol for him, and sent

him out to see what he could do with it. Never in his life, he says, was he so anxious. Fortune favoured him : before long some pigeons alighted on the bushes within shot. He cocked his weapon, brought the breech close to his nose, took deliberate aim, pulled the trigger, and next moment was sensible of a humming noise, like that of a stone sent swiftly through the air, and nothing more. When he recovered from this shock, the pistol was lying several paces behind him, his face was bruised and covered with blood ; but what cared he ? for the pigeon was fluttering in its death-throes on the ground. He ran home with it in triumph, to have his face bound up, and his pistol exchanged for a real gun, with which he went out again, and proved himself a likely lad by killing three more pigeons without missing a shot.

What was this, though, to the pride and glory which covered him soon afterwards when he killed a bear ! Then he must have felt, as another Indian hunter tells us he did on the same lucky occasion, 'as if his little leggings could scarcely hold him.' From that day there could be no further doubt of his manhood. His mother hugged and kissed him with delight at the news ; his father gave a good thrashing to an ill-tempered 'aunt,' who had ridiculed the boy's pretensions as he was setting out on this hunt. And we may imagine that his companions looked up to him with envy and admiration, as to a boy who had gained a scholarship, or made a score of three figures for his school at a cricket match. A bear, indeed, was a rare chance for a boy ; but with his bow and arrow, in the shallow waters of summer, he might well have killed a sturgeon almost twice as long as himself. Such exploits would be made the occasion of great rejoicing in the wigwam, for the young hunter's bringing home his first beast, bird, or fish of each kind was always marked by a feast held in his special honour, by way of encouraging him to go on as he had begun, and turn

out a credit to the family.¹ And the little child, scarcely able to run, would have a live rabbit put on the sly for him into his baby snare by some kind friend, that he, too, might believe himself a hunter.

Allusion has already been made to the strange customs of 'medicine hunting.' The Indians carried superstition into this as into every part of life; they paid the utmost attention to dreams, which, as they believed, guided them to the haunts of their game, and put high trust in charms and incantations to command success in the chase. Before the setting out of large hunting-parties, those who were to take part in them would solemnly blacken their faces, fast, sacrifice dogs, make vows, and observe the omens as on taking the war-path. A hunter who desired to surpass his fellows, did not grudge a handsome fee to a pow-wow for secretly instructing him in some choice spell, and would spend his leisure hours for months in learning by heart a string of rigmarole howls, called a medicine song, which was to give him a mysterious mastery over the animal world. A recently-baptized Indian is narrated to have come back to the missionary, indignantly complaining that since he allowed himself to be christened his luck was all gone; accordingly, he insisted upon being disenchanted of the white man's useless *medicine*. In all probability, his own medicine men had put this idea into his head. It was their interest to have a monopoly of influence with the unseen powers, and an excellent thing they seem to have made of this branch of their business, dealing, as certain other craftsmen dealt in the silver shrines of Diana, in incantations and magical knick-knacks to be carried in the hunter's medicine bag.

John Tanner declares that, after singing and praying half the night, he would be visited by the form of a beautiful young

¹ One traveller was informed that even the catching of a child's first *flca* did not fail to be celebrated, but perhaps some one was making game of him.

man, descending through the smoke-hole of his lodge, and addressing him thus: 'What is this noise and crying that I hear? Do I not know when you are hungry and in distress? I look down upon you at all times, and it is not necessary that you should call me with such loud cries. Do you see these tracks?' pointing to west or the east; 'they are the tracks of two moose. I give you those two moose to eat.' Tanner mentions several instances in which he has known a vision like this to be exactly fulfilled, and, if he be speaking the truth, evidently believes that some supernatural power had thus condescended to provide for his wants, though in truth there was nothing so very miraculous in coming upon game after a long and patient search for its traces, and a half-starved and credulous savage would not always be scrupulously careful to note whether the dream came before or after this stroke of good fortune. This Tanner also confesses, without treating it as a matter of much consequence, that when the crafty old squaw whom he called his mother announced, as she had a way of doing, how, after praying and singing all night, the spirit had revealed to her a bear which was lying in such and such a place, and which she might consider her own for the trouble of taking it, the bear would indeed turn out to be a fact; but the truth was, that the old woman had tracked it into a thicket the day before, and made sure that it was to be found there when looked for before seeing it in a vision! So the success of medicine hunting was no doubt composed in most cases of a pound of faith, an ounce of cunning, and a grain or two of coincidence.

But if the red men sought supernatural aid in hunting, it was not for want of skill and dexterity of their own. It was wonderful with what patience and cunning they tracked their game, creeping through the woods for miles to approach the timid deer from leeward, that they might get within range without being scented, and lying hid for hours on the chance

of a shot. Disguising themselves in the skin of a stag, antlers and all, they would be allowed to steal almost among the browsing herd; or, bleating like a fawn, they lured the anxious doe to her death, and perhaps brought out a bear or panther expecting to dine and not to be dined on. So on the lakes and swamps they made themselves huts of boughs, beside which floated upon a plank a cleverly-stuffed decoy that deceived the geese and ducks and bustards only too well. Or, at night, drifting down some stream in a canoe furnished with a screen of bark or branches, they shot the deer that were attracted by the burning torch in the bow. If this were a book about beasts, and not about men, it might be filled with accounts of similar devices, most of which are now familiar to us by description, but which the white hunters first learned from the despised Indian, who, of whatever else he may have been ignorant, at least knew thoroughly the business of getting his living. Trained almost from infancy in the school of the forest, he made himself master of the ways and haunts of every beast, bird, and fish upon which he might have to depend for a subsistence, and his senses often became like instincts only less sure than those of the animals themselves.

Of the extraordinary acuteness thus acquired, our most familiar example is the bloodhound sagacity with which he could follow a trail, and interpret the slightest signs of the presence of friend or foe. Where to the white man's eye nothing appeared but untrodden grass or unbroken foliage, the Indian could tell at a glance how and when human feet had passed that way, and, on examination, might be able to pronounce on the number, the sex, the age, and the tribe of these unseen travellers.¹ Let it be noticed, however, that

¹ There were slight peculiarities in the footsteps of different tribes; but the white men were easily recognised by their toes being turned out, which the Indians never did.

only in novels were the red men's observations always infallible. The heroes of several true stories would never have lived to tell them, unless their pursuers had been too excited or too unskilled not to miss their trail.

In search of game, the Indians would often wander far from home, and become familiar with the features of a region larger than that visited by most Englishmen in the course of their lives, even since the days of railways. A thousand miles was a journey that did not daunt them. J. D. Hunter and a party of Kansas Indians went a hunting tour from the Arkansas river to the Pacific Ocean, a distance of at least twenty-five degrees of longitude. There were many Indians who had travelled from the Canadian lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, and whole tribes have been known to migrate almost as far as the breadth of Europe.

In these long journeys the Indian might seem to have a faculty by which he steered straight through the pathless forest as unerringly as the sailor by his magnetic needle. In the open-air life of this people, the sunrise and the sunset were closely marked, the hours of the day were read from the sky as from a clock, and the main points of the compass came to be always present to the mind of every child. But if the sun and the polar star, 'the star that does not walk,' were hid from him for days, the Indian traveller still held on his way. When at a loss, he had only to consult the foliage of trees, the moss on their trunks, the thickness of the bark, where unfailing signs taught him on which side was the north. And as he went along through an unknown country, he would here and there break a twig, or mark a tree with his hatchet, that he might direct himself homewards, or guide his friends following. Maps traced upon bark, too, with astonishing correctness, would be made and preserved. A party of travellers would separate for the day, the better to find game, but they

scarcely ever failed to meet at the spot agreed on for their camp.

There were here and there to be found in the most frequented parts of the forest a few narrow beaten paths, 'Indian trails,' leading from one village to another. But the great highways of the backwoods were in its network of rivers and lakes, and the canoe, of birch or elm bark, in which they were navigated, has been called the masterpiece of Indian art. It was so light that a white man, stepping into it awkwardly with heavy boots, would send his foot through the bottom; yet from two to twenty men might be carried in it, and, if carefully packed, twenty hundredweight of goods. The novice found great difficulty in getting into the unsteady craft without upsetting it. The nimble Indian, however, would run along its frail side, and, balancing himself on the prow, would dart his spear into the water, and bring up a gasping fish from a depth where the untrained eye could see nothing. On a windy night, these canoes had to be pegged down on shore to keep them from being blown away; they might at any time be stove in upon a snag, or wrecked on a submerged branch; they could scarcely grate on gravel or rock without being injured, and at the end of almost every day's journey, some crack or seam would need caulking; yet in such egg-shells the Indians did not hesitate to trust themselves to the strongest stream, and would shoot the longest rapids, a league of whirling foam and ragged rocks, among which the frail bark was tossed like a feather and driven like an arrow. When the fall was quite impracticable, or in making a 'portage' from one river to another, two men easily bore the canoe on their shoulders, or, if the distance was great, they might leave it and make a new one in a day or two. The portages were, of course, leading features of the backwoods geography, and very small ones were sometimes the most important. For instance, from a

certain point of the Fox river of Green Bay, communicating with the great lakes, to the Wisconsin river, which fell into the Mississippi, there was scarcely a mile and a half of low prairie, often overflowed ; so here lay naturally the most convenient road between the north and south of the continent.

The Indian's sledges, and the snow shoes, without which it would have been almost impossible to move about in winter, have been often described. It will be noticed that as soon as horses came within their reach, they took to them readily, especially if they happened to belong to somebody else. A red man could walk for enormous distances, but he did not go on foot by choice any more than his white neighbours, of some of whom it was said that they would spend an hour in catching a horse that they might not have to walk a mile. Horses, however, were more common on the western prairies, and the good use which the Indians learned to make of them in chasing the buffalo has been the theme of many an animated description, which might be quoted here if we were not confining our attention to the backwoods region from which the buffalo had almost disappeared as the white men advanced into them.

James Smith has an amusing anecdote of his Indian friend's experience, or rather inexperience of horses, which also gives us a notion of the powers of endurance in these men. He and his brother Tontileaugo came upon a horse, a mare, and a colt, which had strayed into the woods and been running wild all winter. They would be so useful, that hard weather, in dragging home loads of meat, that the Indian was eager to catch them, which he made no doubt of being able to do ; but Smith thought not.

'He said he had run down bears, buffaloes, and elks ; and in the great plains, with only a small snow on the ground, he had run down a deer ; and he thought that in one whole day he could tire or run down any four-footed animal except a wolf.

I told him that though a deer was the swiftest animal to run a short distance, yet it would tire sooner than a horse. He said he would at all events try the experiment. He had heard the Wyandots say that I could run well, and now he would see whether I could or not. I told him that I had never run all day, and of course was not accustomed to that way of running. I never had run with the Wyandots more than seven or eight miles at one time. He said that was nothing; we must either catch these horses or run all day.

'In the morning early we left camp, and about sunrise we started after them, stripped naked excepting breech-clouts and moccasins. About ten o'clock I lost sight of both Tontileaugo and the horses, and did not see them again until about three o'clock in the afternoon. As the horses ran all day in about three or four miles square, at length they passed where I was, and I fell in close after them. As I then had a long rest, I endeavoured to keep ahead of Tontileaugo, and after some time I could hear him after me calling *chakoh*, *chakoa-naugh*, which signifies "pull away," or "do your best." We pursued on, and after some time Tontileaugo passed me; and about an hour before sundown we despaired of catching these horses, and returned to camp, where we had left our clothes.

'I reminded Tontileaugo of what I had told him; he replied he did not know what horses could do. They are wonderful strong to run, but withal we made them very tired. Tontileaugo then concluded he would do as the Indians did with wild horses when out at war, which is to shoot them through the neck under the mane and above the bone, which will cause them to fall and lie until they can halter them, and then they recover again. This he attempted to do, but as the mare was very wild, he could not get sufficiently nigh to shoot her in the proper place; however, he shot: the ball passed too low and killed her. As the horse and colt stayed at this place, we

caught the horse and took him and the colt with us to camp.'

Dogs were more familiar inhabitants of the wigwams, where they went in and out as freely as the pig of an Irish cabin, and were looked upon almost as members of the family, receiving, however, a greater share of the kicks than of whatever else might be going. They were used not only in hunting, but to draw the sledges in winter; they might even be trained to dive into the water for fish. Their flesh, as we have seen, had a certain sacred character in sacrifices and feasts, and the bones of the victims of these ceremonies were carefully buried. So the dog was clearly a figure of importance in Indian life.

The objects of the chase, of course, varied with the season and the locality; such names as the 'deer month' and the 'sturgeon month' speak for themselves, like the 'corn month' and the 'snow month,' for by so practical characteristics did the red man mark the rolling course of the year. Of one thing we may be certain, that the Indians did not trouble themselves about hunting so long as they could do without it. If we were to visit one of their villages at the height of summer, which was their holiday season, we should find them revelling at ease in their crops of green corn, and beans, and pumpkins, helped out by the fish, which was to be had for the spearing; by the venison, which the hunter would shoot now and again to keep his hand in; and, perhaps, by what bear's oil and maple sugar would be remaining from their winter stores.

With autumn came new resources. The thickets were full of nuts and berries, the lakes and rivers clamorous with wild-fowl about to migrate southwards. The roof of every wigwam was hung thick with the ripe ears of corn, and there need be no lack of hominy to fill the hospitable kettles. If this were not enough, the hunters had only to sally out into the woods, beautiful in all the tints of the fall, and luxuriate in fat game

to their hearts' content. At this season, if they were wise, they laid in a stock of dried meat to secure them against want in the severe weather that was now at hand. In large companies they would beat the woods, taking a wide sweep at first, and drawing closer together as they drove the deer into narrower and narrower bounds towards the water, where the boys and women were waiting in canoes to tomahawk those which escaped the rifles, firing faster and faster till it might be supposed that a hot battle was going on. A still more deadly battue was brought on by kindling a circle of fire, which, closing inwards, sent the startled animals flying in strange confusion, wolves, deer, and panthers mad with common terror, right to the muzzles of their destroyers, each of whom, loading and firing furiously, with his mouth full of bullets so as not to lose a moment, in a short time might well bag ten times as much game as he could carry. This 'ring hunting,' however, was a dangerous experiment; for if the Indians were mistaken in their expectations of rain about to fall, the fire might spread with resistless force, and destroy a space equal to an English county. Another expedient was to make an enclosure of palisades, into which the deer might be driven and butchered at leisure.

By and by the cold winds stripped bare every faded covert, the flocks of birds had taken wing, the beasts began to seek their winter quarters. Now it behoved the Indian to exert himself in real earnest. The winter was his working time, in his eyes the more typical half of his hard life, for he spoke of years not as summers but as 'snows.' He had not only to labour for the support of himself and his family through the bitter months, but to gather the skins on which he must depend for his supplies from the traders next spring. So he gave up his feasts and dances, and set himself to toil across the whitened plains, where every claw and hoof left a clear

track to guide his snow shoes to its place of refuge. When the snow grew hard, indeed, his footsteps, resounding far through the frozen solitudes, scared away the quick-eared animals from the range of his rifle ; yet as often as there came a fresh fall, or the sun produced a slight thaw for a few hours, a crackling crust was formed, through which the legs of the mighty moose and elk broke and sunk, staining the dazzling surface with blood at every painful slip, and they floundered a helpless prey.

But his surest victim was the unwieldy bear, sleeping on its summer store of fat in a cave or hollow trunk, or among the roots of some fallen tree, where it only asked to be left in peace through the hard winter, and was in no state either to fight or fly. But there might be no peace for such a profitable prize when once the Indian's keen eye had noticed the traces which its claws had left on the bark, and the leafless branches soon allowed its retreat to be espied, while the tell-tale snow around, smooth and unbroken, announced it too plainly to be at home. Forty feet up the vast trunk it might have climbed for a secure lair, but man was still more artful. Cutting down a sapling, he would use it as a ladder to scale the undefended fortress ; then with a piece of burning touchwood at the end of a pole, he would search the airy cavern, and rouse the shaggy inhabitants from the long slumber which was now like to be their last. If the hole could not be reached, the hunters would labour for hours, or days even, hacking and hewing, till at last the crumbling elm came down with a mighty crash, and Bruin and her blinking cubs dragged themselves forth into the light of day, to be shot down before they could recover from their amazement at this disturbance.

The hunters could now enjoy their favourite repast, first setting up on a scaffold or a pole the grim head, painted and

decked out with wampum and trinkets, and blowing tobacco smoke into its nostrils to appease the bear's ghost. The choicest parts of the meat, the paws and the tongue, might be cooked and eaten on the spot; the rest was smoked and dried, or simply left to be frozen for future use. The rich fat was melted down, and the oil stored in deer or porcupine skins, which served as bottles. This oil was to the Indian meat and drink, and, in a manner, clothing, for he rubbed it on his body to give him strength and warmth. Between two and three hundred quarts of this valuable commodity could be had from a fat bear, so several days were not reckoned ill spent in tracking and unearthing a single one.

It was, of course, the common black or brown bear with which our hunters had to do; for the terrible 'grizzly' we must look farther west. There was little danger in hunting those bears, which are of vegetarian tastes, and seldom attack any one so long as they are allowed to go their own way in peace, while in the season they would be generally too fat to be very formidable. Yet, when lean and hungry, or if wounded, even a bear would turn; and the man who had felt one hug from its broad paws, never wanted another.

A bear was the greatest catch in those parts from which the buffalo had disappeared; but bears were not to be had every day, and the Indian could seldom afford to despise smaller dealings in flesh and fur. He knew well where to find the racoons lying almost torpid with cold in a hollow log, and how to snare the otter as it crept on shore to nibble at bark or roots. As many traps as he could make, he set for the foxes, martins, rabbits, and other small animals that, in their own distress, were fain to prowl near the habitations of their inveterate two-legged enemy. He cut holes in the ice, over which—spear in hand, and with a blanket round his head excluding the light—he watched like a cat; then, as any

unlucky fish approached the opening, down went the spear, and in a moment it was writhing and flopping in the keen air. So, too, he speared the musk rat, searching the frozen banks for the nest in which it was lying snug and safe, till the blow fell from an unseen hand directed by a practised eye—and the musk rat's great kinsman, the beaver, its fur was best in winter. When the ice put an end to trapping, the hunter could cross it to the beaver lodges, and ruthlessly break them up; whereupon the cunning colony would betake themselves to the water, seeking their holes beside the edge, whence, betrayed by the air-bubbles rising to the top, he dragged them out, putting in his hand and catching them by the hind leg, at the risk of a severe bite from their sharp teeth. So great was the admiration of the Indians for the wonderful instincts of this animal, that some of them fabled it to be a relation of the human race, and refused to hunt it. But such a sentiment was less common than a taste for that prime morsel of its flesh, the tail, while its skin was their most valuable article of commerce to all the tribes that dealt with the white traders. If the beavers knew the reason for which such hot war is proclaimed against them, says La Hontan, they would flay themselves alive.

The opening of the year, which with the Indians began with the breaking up of winter, found them living on whatever dried venison, bear's oil, maple sugar, and hominy they might have saved for this slack season, or perhaps starving with the patient philosophy which was such a commoner virtue with them than thrift or foresight. The beasts of game were now at their leanest, and also in their wildest mood; and the general thaw filled the woods with a deluge of mud which made hunting almost impossible. Besides, by this time, unless there had been a visit of some enterprising trader, touting for business in spite of the weather, the hunter's ammunition

would be well-nigh exhausted, and he might be going about in rags ; so it now behoved him to gather his packs, and set off to the trading-post favoured by his custom. There, if all the produce of his winter hunt did not go to pay his debts, he would fit himself out with shirts, scarlet leggings, and other finery, over and above the necessaries of his life ; and it were well if he did not squander the greater part of his gains on one mad bout of drunkenness, in which, for a day or two, he forgot the hardships and labours of the past year. Tanner says that his Indian mother sold in one day, for rum, a hundred and twenty beaver skins, besides many buffalo robes. On such transactions the 'enterprising' trader was sometimes able to clear a profit of more than 1000 per cent. !

We have heard of the ingenuity with which the travellers through the woods and prairies would bury their property in *cachés*, pits so cleverly dug and covered that no eye but the owner's could detect them. It was the white men, however, who made precautions of this sort necessary. So long as the Indians were at peace, they generally respected each other's packs and traps, which would be left exposed in the woods with entire confidence. Skins would be temporarily stored in weather-tight magazines of logs, till the hunter found it convenient to fetch them away. Alexander Henry describes how his party carried forty hundredweight of dried meat and peltries, accumulated in their winter camp, and all the rest of their property, to the lake where they had left their canoes the autumn before. They set off at daybreak with as much as they could carry, marched till two o'clock, then put up a scaffold on which they left their packs, and returned to the encampment for the night. Next day they brought another load, until all was thus forwarded one stage, when they shifted their camp, and began the same toilsome process afresh, stopping for some days on the way to make sugar, and spending a

month or two altogether on their road to market, though the distance was only seventy miles by land, and three days' canoeing. Time was one of the least valuable commodities among the Indians.

Each tribe had its own recognised hunting-grounds, which its friendly neighbours did not fail to respect. An encroachment on these bounds was taken as a *casus belli*; so, too, seems to have been killing the female of the beavers, or any other injury to the interests of hunting, as shooting a fox would be considered in an English county. A single hunter who undertook to poach where he had no right, ran the risk of having all his ill-gotten gains taken from him, and being sent off with only a handful of powder and shot enough to keep him from starving on his way home. Indeed, he might think himself lucky if he came off no worse, especially if he fell in with a party on the war-path, for when employed about such an errand, the warriors were not particular as to whose scalp they added to their trophies.

There appears also to have been a code of honour among them as to the ownership of game, though the customs varied in different tribes. Thus, in one case, an animal was held to belong to the man who first wounded it; in another, to him who gave it the death-blow. A curious etiquette is said to have sometimes obliged an Indian to share the produce of his chase with whomsoever he happened to meet while carrying it back into the village. Whatever might be the custom, disputes are rarely heard of. An Indian's right in anything to eat was not unlike that of a schoolboy in his cake, which is his own, certainly; but to eat it all himself would be looked on as almost criminal, and his class-fellows or room-mates are considered to have a special claim to share in it. Tanner speaks with disgust and contempt of some Chippeways who, when he and his companions were in want, would give them nothing

but a single meal without being paid for it—a thing unheard of among good Indians.

Commerce was not altogether unknown in the forests. Friendly tribes would exchange tobacco, wampum, corn, fish, or other conveniences for those with which their situation did not allow them to supply themselves; and all over the continent there appears to have been an active trade among the medicine men in images, charms, and pieces of sacred rubbish. But all valuable property being considered as vested in the tribe or the totemic clan, the acquisitive propensities of the individual were not excited, in the state of nature, beyond articles of personal use or ornament, and the vice of covetousness had little to do with Indian passions. They had to learn this and others from the Christians who came among them with such high pretensions to superior virtue. That a deer was worth a dollar, and that the owner of a dollar was worth more than his dollarless fellow, was a foreign notion; yet when once introduced into the red man's mind, it was one most pregnant with results. Though money has often been declared to be the root of all evil, buying and selling and getting gain were the chief instruments in opening up the dark thickets of savage life.

It was almost impossible for the warlike and wayward nature of the Indians to enter into the 'business' notions of a civilised community, and our institutions of property could not be introduced among them without a great change in their social relations and customs. The few were able to settle down among their white neighbours to the peaceful and prosaic ways of working and earning; the many persisted in looking on themselves as the gentlemen of creation, born to hunt and fight, while the poor-spirited whites might have a monopoly of producing, manufacturing, and trading for their convenience. Yet, with all their pride and idleness, they themselves blindly

sacrificed their own independence, becoming accustomed to the luxuries introduced among them, depending on the strangers for clothes and ammunition, even forgetting how to make the rude utensils of their forefathers. So, whereas it had once been a high point of Indian morals never to destroy wantonly game not required for food, they now, to purchase these things, killed off, for the sake of their furs, the animals that were like a golden-egged goose to them, and had to retire farther and farther into the wilderness, as the bear and beaver were exterminated from one district after another, thus banishing themselves from their native woods faster than they were driven out by force. So the trader did more than the fighter to clear the country for the plough.

The change had to come, by whatever means brought about. Old Mother Earth, as her large family grows, can't afford to go on indulging such wasteful ways as those of the red men. Every deer they ate took up a whole farm for its pasture of leaves and moss; every half-starved band required for their subsistence a tract of land large enough, if rightly managed, to feed a town. When an active and shifty race were increasing and multiplying over the whole New World, the Indian could not be kept on such terms. Sentimentalists may lament over him, romancers may dream about him, philanthropists may labour for him so often in vain; but the son of the forest, clinging to his savage instincts, his impracticable virtues and incurable vices, is fated to vanish along with his native swamps and jungles, leaving the soil for those who can make the most of it. He can remain in his old home only on condition of ceasing to be that type of man which we know as the Red Indian.

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